

Richard AN *Inings* 6^s-7^d
EXPOSITION

On the whole Book of

Solomons Song ;

Commonly called the

CANTICLES.

1st par and 111

WHEREIN

The Text is explained, and usefull

OBSERVATIONS raised thereupon.

By JOHN ROBOTHAM (formerly near *Chichester*, and
now in *Dover*) Preacher of the Gospel.

PSAL. 45. 13.

The Kings daughter is all glorious within, her cloathing is of wrought gold.

EPHES. 5. 32.

This is a great mysterie, but I speake concerning Christ and the Church.

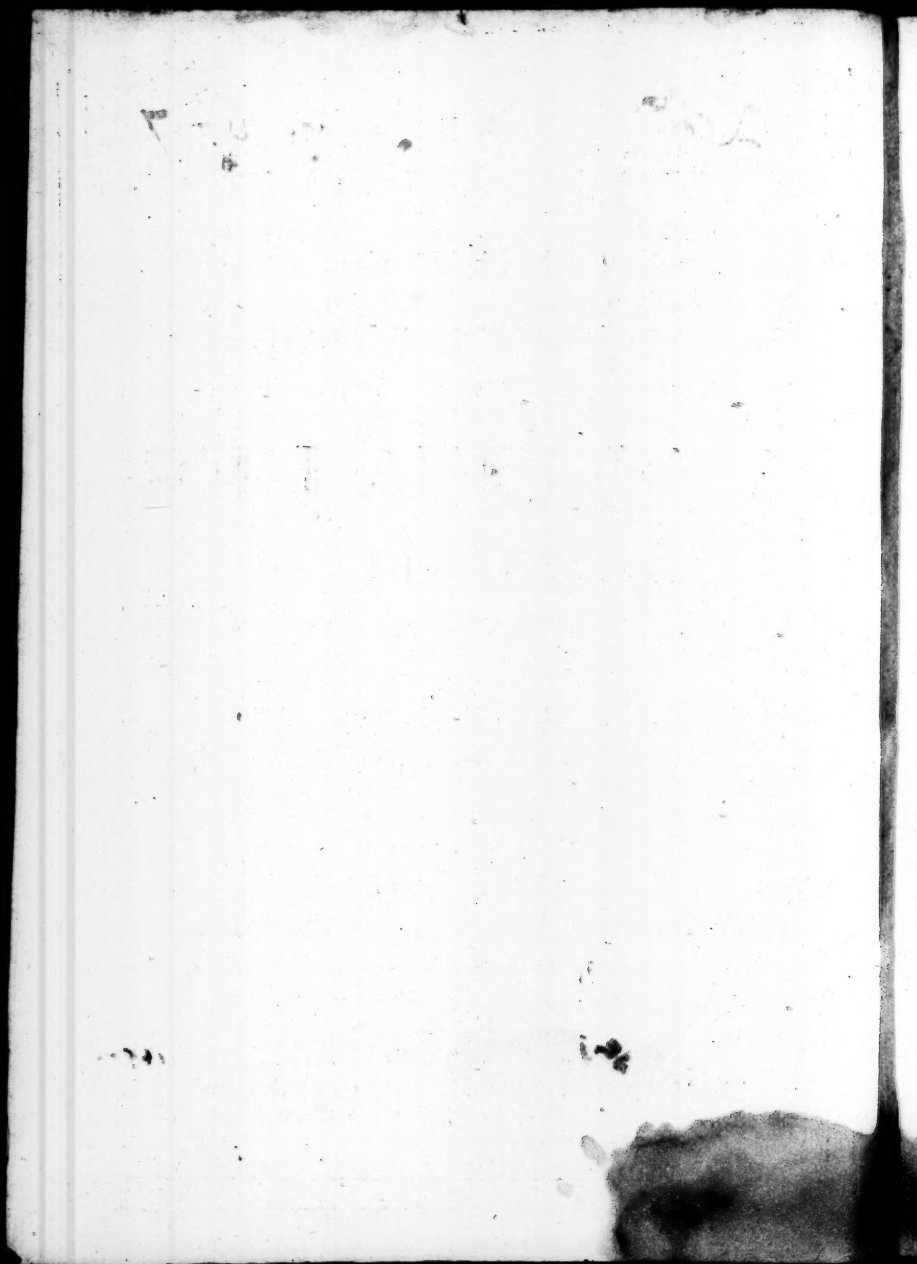


LONDON:



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1 6 5 2.





To the
HONORABLE COLONEL
DOWNES, Esquire, A Mem-
ber of the Honourable House of Parlia-
ment, Justice of the Peace, and Deputy
Lieutenant of the County of *Sussex*.

Much Honoured Sir,



*He experience that I have of your can-
dour and ingennitie, emboldens me
here to prefix your name, not from any
worth in the worke performed on my
part; but in respect of the subject
matter of this book, which is a decla-
ration of that mutuall intercourse and vicissitude of
divine love, passing betweene Christ, and the Church his
Spouse; set forth by a most sweet and comfortable, by a
most excellent and ravishing Allegorie, of a Marriage-
Song: Marriage being the most joyfull passage of all our
life, and a Song being the highest expression of joy; by
this*

The Epistle Dedicatorie.

this amiable resemblance, is the soules spiritual conjunction with Christ, most lively delineated: Oh! the supereminence excellency of divine love; tis the glorie of God, the joy of his heart, tis the fulnesse of Christ, his Crowne and dignitie, tis the worke of the Spirit, in all its operations, tis the Song of Angels, and their continual delight: tis the fource and spring of true happinesse to all Saints: the Sanctuary, and support of their dejected soules: This opens the Fathers bosome, draws forth the affections of Christ, and melts mens hearts into each others; the sweet sense whereof is the breath of our nostrils, and the life of our union with him.

Noble Sir, I have but three words to speake, The first is, of you: the second, to you: the third, for you.

That of you is to testifie, that as the Lord hath called you to high and honourable imployment, so he hath raised your spirit suitable to the worke in hand; wherein you stood as a Rock immoveable in the middest of stormes and tempests, having (like Obed-Edom) owned the Arke, when few would owne it, ventring all that was dear unto you, accounting godlinesse the greatest gaine, when others have reckoned it their losse, esteeming that your honour, that others have deemed their shame. Though it be granted, that Truth needs no Patron (veritas stat in aperto campo) being better able to support, honour, and advance us, then we can that, yet thrice happy and blessed are they that owne it: therefore the more you engage for Truth, the more will truth dignifie and advance you. Whatsoever you expend, for Christ, in Christ you shall find it againe, and shall receive your owne, with the greatest advantage. The Philosophers expression of good is, Bonum est sui communicatum: Good is communicative; the more good therefore you shall

The Epistle Dedicatorie.

shall expend, the more shall you discover a principle of goodnesse to dwell in your heart, flowing from the fountaine of fulnesse, distilling from Christ.

And that you have engaged me with many undeserved favours, I should be ingratefull either to deny, or forget them: though I cannot make you a retaliation, (*Nihil dat quod non habet*) yet that you may know, kindnesses are ner forgotten in a thankfull breast, give me leave to present this as a witnesse, and testimony of my gratitude to you-wards; being confident you will receive it, as I present it, with the spirit of love.

That to you is, that you would fix your affections upon, and let the whole streame of them runne unto that only delectable, and love deserving Object Christ, who is the glorie of all delights, and abstract of all praises. Its the nature of true joy, to delight it selfe in some solid good; and there is no good can be compared cum summo bono with that only chiefe and eternall good, that is treasured up in Christ.

When wee suffer the creatures to steale away our affections, we not only lose the right use of them, but thereby bereave our selves of true comfort in God, render our selves dishonourable in the eyes of good men, and unprofitable to our selves: for though the creatures may serve us, yet they cannot love us; tis only Christ that can make sweet returns of love, for our love. In which gracious manifestations of Christ, our hearts are made a spring of living waters, a garden of spirituall delight, the musick of heavenly joyes, the treasure of divine comforts, and by the impressions of that heavenly love, and the sweet glimmerings and flashes of light, life, and glorie in Christ, our soules are abundantly refreshed, and satisfi-

as

The Epistle Dedicatorie.

as with marrow and fatnesse. Then (Sir.) this will be your Crowne and glory, this is that will heighten your spirit, ennoble your minde, enlarge your heart, and make you most acceptable to God, precious in the sight of men, and exquisitely carry you through your weighty employments. It is said of Solomon (that excellent Sonne of wisdom) that his heart was as large as the Sea, viz. in judgement and understanding : so shall your judgement, wisdom, and understanding be enlarged, according to the largenesse of Christs love living in you. The Jewes were to offer those creatures in sacrifice unto God, which the Nations worshipped for their God : so though other men fall downe and doe homage to the creatures; yet let it be in your heart, to sacrifice them all unto the Creator. Surely man is never more straightned, then when he is bound and pent up in the narrow compasse, and scantinesse of earthly things : for let his heart stoop never so low, the World falls beneath it; and let him advance the world to the greatest height, his heart is still above it. But in relation to Christ (cujus contrarium verum est) the matter is farre otherwise: for when mans desires and affections soar never so high, as an Eagle; still Christ is above them, fills them, answers them, yea he doth exceedingly heighten, enlarge, and abundantly satisfie them.

Sir, I shall conclude with a word for you, expressing the desires of my spirit on your behalfe : that the Lord would be pleased to fill your precious soule with the exceeding riches of his love, grace, and favour, and cause his glorie to shine upon you so, as to transforme you into the image of his glorie : that the sweet kisses of Christs lips, may be more precious to you, then fragrant wine, and his

name

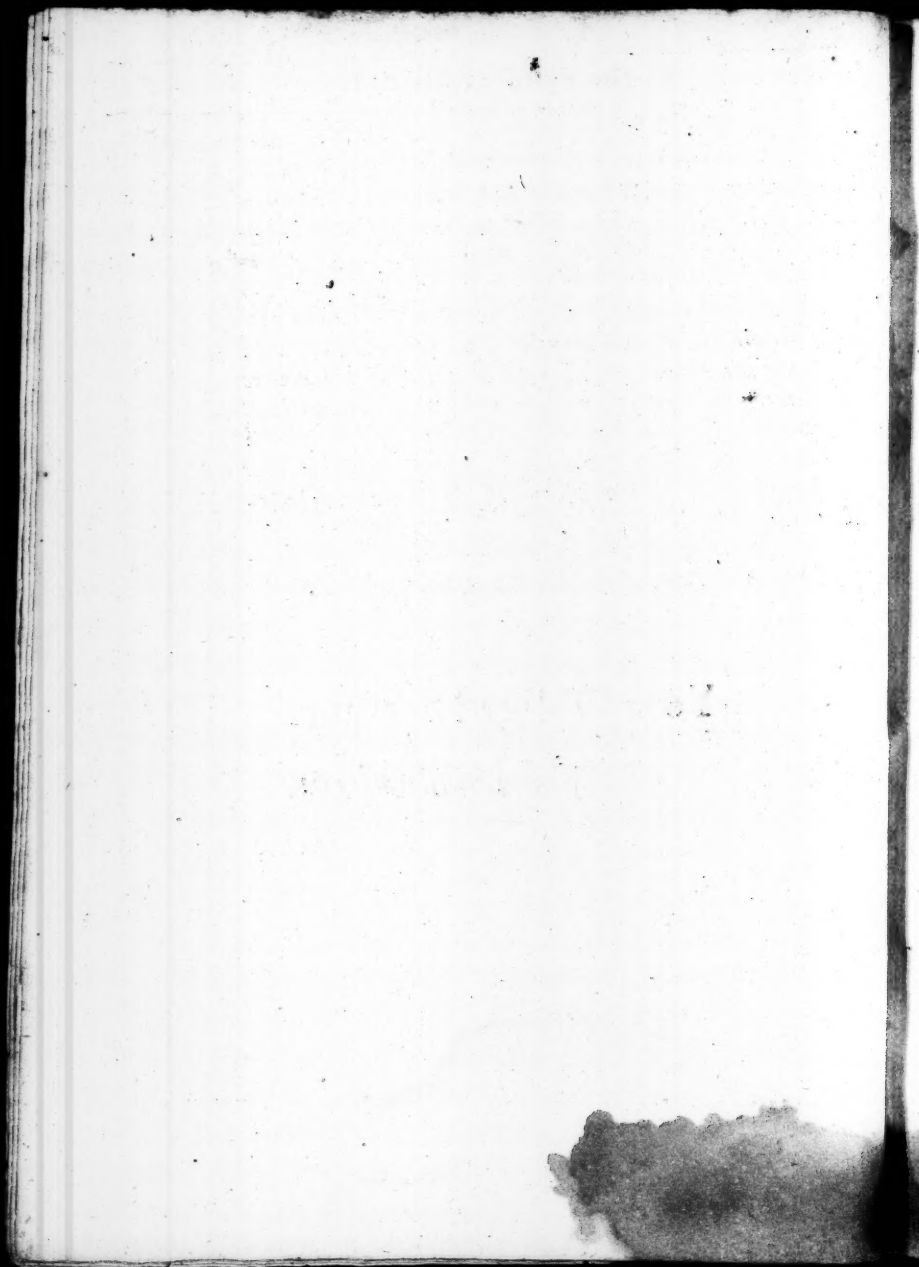
The Epistle Dedicatorie.

name then the richest oyniment, that the senses of your soule may be more refreshed with his redolent sweetnesse, and filled more with his redundant fulnesse, then withall the most delightfull things in the world; yea, that Christ would please to lodge all night betwixt your Breasts, continually dwelling in your heart and affections, and that he would come into your soule, as into his garden, to eate his pleasant fruits, his honey, with his honey-comb; and to gather his myrrhe with his spices; that by his divine influence, your soule may be filled with all the aromaticall fruits of the Spirit: And lastly, that you would cast down your Crown and glory at the feet of Christ, who will be the glory of your Crowne here, and your Crowne of eternal glorie hereafter.

This is Sir, the hearty desire of him, who is.

Your Obliged Servant.

John Robotham.



To the READER.

Christian and Courteous Reader.

Solomon hath left us three Books, the *Proverbs*, *Ecclesiastes*, and the *Canticles*; the first begins thus, *The Proverbs of Solomon, the Son of David, King of Israel*; the second thus, *The words of the Preacher, the Son of David King in Jerusalem*; the third only thus, *The Song of Songs*, which is *Solomons*; In the first and second he sets out himselfe by great Titles which here he waves. This being the *Song of Songs*, was a Crown of glory to his head, and to the work also; other songs were made by *Moses, Deborah, Hannah, David*, neither of which had this Title; though they were spirituall and excellent, they fell short of this song for matter and stile. This Song is the *Song of Songs*, and hath an excellency in it beyond all others; it comprehends in it such sacred and high mysteries, that the Hebrew Doctors would not have young men to read or expound it, till they came to 30 years of age; The things in it, said they, were too obscene for them, and required chaste minds. But besides this book, somewhat in *Geness* and *Ezekiel*, which also they would not have them meddle with; there be divers other parts of holy Scripture obscure and difficult, which then must be laid aside for a time at least. Whereas our Lord *Jesus Christ* bids all indefinitely to search the Scriptures, & chastity of mind is requisite to the reading and studying of any & every part therof. Through the piety & pains of the learned we have had many dark & difficult Scriptures opened. *Augustine* saith of the *Canticles*, that *Cantica Canticorum enigmata sunt, paucis intelligentibus nota sunt, paucis pulsantibus aperiuntur*. They are riddles known to very few, though wise and diligent in seeking out the knowledge of them. However many have not attain'd

*Tom. 9. lib.
de pastorib. m*

To the READER,

to that excellency, yet some have, among whom is this Author, who being the *Bride-groom*s friend hath unfolded these Riddles, made dark things, light some, and difficult things easie. Here Reader, thou mayst behold the King in his glory, the Spouse in her beauty, the mutual affections which are between them, what spirituall entertainment is given on both sides, with the sweet content they have in each others love. Here thou maist see Christ directing his Church, giving her sweet promises, adorning her with sundry excellencies, communicating his love, and commending her graces. Here also thou mayst see the Church ravished with consideration and contemplation of Christs love and bounty, subjecting her selfe to his teaching, glorying in his excellencies, praying for his coming, that so she may have full fruition of him; all which may be of great use and advantage to thee. Besides the opening of Difficulties in this Song, the Author hath gathered up many precious observations, which may be as Flagons of wine and apples of comfort to thy fainting Soul. Come therefore all yee who are friends to the *Bridegroom*, and favorites to the *Bride*, eat and drink abundantly, so shall your Souls live and glorifie the God of truth; which that you may fully doe, is the earnest desire and prayer of him, who is,

The 26th of the first Month,

1652

Your Brother and Servant
in the Lord,

W. G.

Courteous READER.

THere are things whose worth and excellency are sufficient to make them acceptable, being necessitated to require neither the tongues of the best Orators, or the pens of the readiest writers to advance their praise; Amongst things so well accommodated doe I esteeme the Treatise, which from the heart, and by the hand of a choice spirited Gospel-Minister, is here presented to thy perusing, and which the spirit of the Lord in him, hath holpen to make publike. If I should be demanded why I speake any thing, I can quickly answer, that it is not to adde the least wile to its worth, but rather to invite thee to give it entertainment; as wishing well to thy Soul, conceiving it profitable to thee. He that hath bought good wares himself, doth but friendly to direct another, that needs, to a place where he may be likewise furnished; Commendations are sometimes effectuell to helpe to customers; It may allure an Appetite to taste of that wine another praiseth. If thou wilt trust my experience, let the ensuing Treatise be entertain'd, I am not more a servant to the truth therein contain'd, then to thee to guide thee to what may be for thy good. Wouldst thou delight thy ear, thou hast an admirable Song, and wel tun'd; I hope it will affect thee, I am sure it wil, if thou beest not carnal. To please thy eye, he that is a friend to the Bride-groom and the Bride, is a friend to shew them in their Gallantry for thee to behold; Wouldst thou any other delight, here's a Garden (the door of which the Author hath set open) to refresh thee, an Orchard with variety of fruits to feed thee, Honey most wholesome prepar'd to comfort, and a fountain unseal'd, that thou maist make use of, with all variety of spices for thy accommodation; And indeed unlesse I had ability to set out all the excellencies of Christ and his Church (which is a worke that men and angels are not sufficient for) I cannot set out the variety of what is here presented, to draw thy Soul to a more intimate union with what soever hath any thing of goodnesse in it. There is not a sweet word, nor a courteous gesture of Christ, that is here spoken of or presented, but it is directed to thee for thy comfort; When the words, Love, Dove,, Sister, Spouse, Friend and the like are us'd, 'tis he speaking to thy Soul that is love it self, if thou beest Christs; The Reverend Author is an Instrument, made use of by Jesus Christ,

To the Reader.

to let thee know what is offer'd thee for thy good : For what soever sweet communion others have had, or hath with Christ, you are invited to the same, and what soever mercies others have received, the like is tendered to thee. I know 'tis his will that hath taken pains in this worke, that I should continue at a just distance, not adventuring to sacrifice to his praise, beyond what is meet ; for if his pains may be advantagious in the way of salvation to any poor soules, he will suppose it reward enough for his undertakings. I doubt not but when thou hast read it, if the spirit of the Lord be in thee, but thou wilt be convinced that a gracious heart was instrumentall to bring it into the world, and that it is fit to be esteemed as one of the precious jewels of the Church of Christ, and its proportions and lineaments will be so like truth, that you shall acknowledge it a birth of truth. Here is nothing that savours of vaine-glory, nothing that tends to the advancing of sinfull selfe, nothing that may adde nourishment to fruitlesse opinions, nothing that may countenance uselesse janglings, nothing that may further what is evil, or which should delude rather then edifie : Thou maist see the vicissitudes that befall the Church presented clearly to thee, but all is but the Needle-worke of Divine actings, sitting the Church in a dress suitable for her, that is to be an everlasting Spouse to the King of Kings. I shall no longer detain thee, good Reader with a complement at the door, but rather desire thee to enter into the house of Love, where thou maist freely take thy fill of Love, with him that is nothing else but love, to those that are his loves ; of which number I desire that thou maist be one, and herein thou hast me longing to be in union with thee, that am thine if thou art Christ,

Jo. Symonds.

AN
EXPOSITION

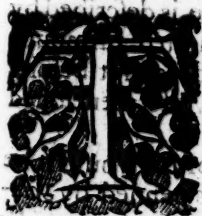
Of the Song of

SOLOMON

Called *Canticles*.

CHAP. I.

VERS. 1. *A song of songs, which is
Solomons.*



HIS Song of *Solomon* is not unfitly compared, and called after the most holy place of the Temple, which he built; for this song of songs, or most excellent song resembleth the Holy of Holies, or the most holy place.

The occasion of this Song was *Solomon's* marriage with *Pharaoh's* Daughter, who was a stranger by birth from the Common-wealth of *Israel*; yet shee became a Proselyte to the Jewish religion, as you

B

may

may see in *Psal.* 45. 10. *Hearken (O daughter) and consider, and incline thine eare, forget also thine own people, & thy fathers house.* By *daughter* here is meant the *Queen*, mentioned in *vers.* 9. which did figure out the Church, or the *heavenly Jerusalem, the Lambs wife*, *Rev.* 21. 9, 10. So that herein *Solomon* was a type of *Christ*, admitting the *Gentiles* into communion and fellowship with himselfe.

Now it was the manner of old, at *Esponsalls* and *Nuptials* to sing (*Epithalamia*) love-songs, or songs of betrothings: this is then, without all controversy, a song between a *Bridegroom* & a *Bride*, wherein divers persons are brought in, uttering their parts in it, but especially two, which are *Lovers*, betrothed each unto the other. True it is, that the *Bridegroom* and this *Bride* are not named by any proper names in all this song; but it is most cleare and evident who they be, by those excellent descriptions which are made of them. For the *Bridegroom* is described to be a *King* of that transcendent and most excellent shining glory & majesty, which none hath attained unto but *Jesus Christ*, the *Son* of the most high *God*; and the *Bride* is described by such rare beauty and glory, which farre surmounteth all the glory of the world, and cannot belong to any but to the *Bride the Lambs Wife*, mentioned *Revel.* 19. 7.

Again, how ridiculous and absurd would it be for any to think, that this song was penned by *Solomon* to expresse his owne affections to *Pharaoh's* daughter, or hers to him; in respect of those strange comparisons, likening the *Spouse* to a company of horses in *Pharaoh's Chariot*, her bed to *Carmel*, her eyes to *Fish-pools*,

pooles, her nose to the tower of Lebanon, her teeth to a flocke of sheep, and the like: this song therefore ascendeth farre above all earthly respects of worldly marriage, being a declaration of the blessed and sweet conjunction between Christ and his Church; and of that contract and espousals made between them, whilst the Church is here on earth.

It was the ancient manner, that the parties intending marriage were betrothed, and after some distance of time the marriage was solemnized: Between the time of their betrothing, and of their solemnizing the marriage, tokens of love and favour did use to passe between them: but when they are married, the Wife is received into the nearest society of her Husband, and becomes a partaker with him of all his riches and possessions, his glory and dignities. Thus it is with the Lord Jesus, he hath betrothed himselfe to his Spouse here on earth, and at last the marriage shall be solemnized, *Revel. 19. 7.* So that all those riches and dignities the Church now receives in the promise, then shee shall have the fruition of them.

We may further take notice, that it is not unusual in Scripture, for Christ to be called the Bridegroom, and the Church the Bride, as in *Isa. 62. 5.* *As the Bridegroom rejoiceth over the Bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.* And again in *Hos. 2. 19.* *I will marry thee unto me for ever; yea, I will marry thee unto me in righteousness, &c.* And also in *2 Cor. 11. 2.* *I have prepared you for one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ, saith the Apostle.* Wee have it from Christs owne mouth in *John 3. 29.* *Hee that hath the Bride is the Bridegroom: but the friend of the Bridegroom*

which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the Bridegroom's voyce. By these Scriptures it is plain, that Christ useth this similitude of marriage, to expresse his love to his Church.

In this song here be divers persons brought in, uttering their parts; sometime speaking, and sometime spoken to: and also the Bride makes mention sometimes of her *mother*; and of her *little sister*. It was the manner of old, that the Bridegroom had young men to be his companions or friends, such are Angels and Saints unto Christ, such were the Prophets and Apostles: *John Baptist* was termed of himselfe to be one of Christs friends. Also the Bride had Virgins to be her companions: these are called in this song, *the daughters of Jerusalem*. And touching the *mother* and *sister* of the Bride, they are both meant the Church of Christ; for it is the manner in the Hebrew tongue to call the whole the Mother, and the parts thereof the Daughters and Sisters: now there is but one universal Church, and therefore called the Brides mother: but the Church is never whole in the world at one time; and in *Solomons* dayes consisting of the *Jewes* only: the Church of the *Gentiles* which was not then in being, is called her *little sister*.

Now the carriage of this song is such, that it doth as well recite the most dismal and saddest passages of the Church, as those that are good and comfortable; yet, lest any thing might darken this marriage song, the saddest passages in it are made sweet by some amiable resemblance. The Church sometimes most of all desires a neare communion with Christ: at other times she declines in her affection againe:
after

after this ſhee recovers : Yet again, ſhe declines in her affections, till at laſt Chriſt draws her nearer in affection to himſelfe, by diſcovering his own love to her. Now in theſe intervails and changes which the Church went through, ſhe met with much trouble and affliction, which is declared in this ſong, together with the joy and comfort ſhee found in the enjoyment of her beloved.

Before wee come to open this ſong, ſomething muſt be ſaid concerning the title, which ſtandereth as a glorious Eulogie or praiſe to the whole enſuing Book, which is contained in the firſt Verſ.

V E R S. I.

The ſong of ſongs which is Solomons.

IN the Title obſerve,

1. The matter, or rather the form of the Book, *it is a ſong.*
2. The tranſcendency of it, *A ſong of ſongs.*
3. The Author of it, *which is Solomons.*

The ſong of ſongs, &c.

Songs and Pſalms are for the moſt part arguments of joy and rejoycing in them that ſing, as in *Jam. 5. 13. Is any merry, let him ſing Pſalms.* So likewiſe they are arguments of praiſe and honour to them, whom they concern; according to the exhortation of the Prophet *David in Pſal. 66. 2. Sing forth the honour of his name : make his praiſe glorious.* In the Greek it is read, *give glory to his praiſe;* that is, make his praiſe glorious and honourable.

In

שיר
Cantavit, unde.
שיר
Canticum.

הלה
Laudavit.

הלל
Laudavit.

מזמור
Psalmus. a
זמר
Putavit, pre-
cidit.

In *Ephes. 5. 19.* there is mention made, First, of *Songs*, which the Greeks call *ὕμνος*, a *song*, or *laye*: it is also called by the Hebrews, *Shir*, a song, which was chiefly made for the voyce, and it contained matter of exultation and rejoycing.

Secondly, *hymns*, called by the Greeks *ὕμνος*, a *hymne* or *praise*: by the Hebrews *Tehilleh*, and signifies *laud* and *praise* in commemoration of benefits received from God: An *hymne* is uttered by the voyce only.

Thirdly, *Psalms*, which the Greeks call *ὕμνος*, the Hebrews *Mizmor*, which commeth of a roote, that signifies to prune or cut off superfluous twigs from trees: this is a kind of an artificial song in a proportioned number of words: A Psalm is played on an Instrument, as well as with the voyce; it contained Arguments of all sorts, for exhortation to morall doctrine or holinesse of life, petition, thanksgiving, and instruction. Many times any of these are put indifferently for all; but this most excellent song contains them all in one: it is as a *song* for joy and rejoycing: it is as a *hymne* for praise and thanksgiving: it is as a *Psalm* for exhortation and instruction.

Again, for as much as we find sundry parties singing, and the one side answering to the other: for which it may be called a *Responsorie*, and hence the forme of this song differs from all other songs in Scripture: For as there are divers singing at once, so there seems to be many songs in this one, and all treating of the mutuall love between Christ and his Church.

Hence observe,

First,

First, *The Church and servants of Christ have alwaies matter of joy and singing*; these only have the true cause of joy, and their joy shall never be taken from them. The joy of carnall men is nothing but madnesse, *Eccles. 2. 2.* Believers only have true and solid joy, flowing from the spirit of Christ within them; they onely can sing, *making melody in their hearts unto the Lord, Ephes. 5. 19.*

Secondly, note, *That the Church can rejoyce in affliction, as well as in prosperity.*

David can sing of his deep waters and calamities, as well as of his great mercies and deliverances: and the Apostle saith in *Phil. 4. 4.* *Rejoyce in the Lord alwayes*: Not only in times of prosperity and mirth, but also in times of adversity and distress: the troubles of the Saints are not so many, or so great, but spirituall joy will mitigate and overcome them all. Afflictions are turned into matter of rejoycing, when they are a meanes to stir up our faith and patience, according to the Apostle, *Jam. 1. 2.*

Thirdly, *Mans reconciliation with God by Jesus Christ is matter of great joy.*

This Booke treating of mans reconciliation with God, and of his sweet conjunction with Christ, with joy in the holy Ghost, is called a Song: yea, it is a marriage song, a song of betrothings. Now what passage of our life is more sweet than that of marriage? and what sweeter expression, then by a song? It thus is set forth unto us the sweet conjunction between the soule and Christ. It is the nature of joy to delight in some solid good: now no good can be compared *cum sum no bono*, with that chiefe & eternall good; it is no wonder then, if the soul doth
much.

much rejoyce to be joyned to Christ, who is the very top of all felicity and happinesse.

Fourthly, observe, *How the Lord takes all advantages to win our affections unto himselfe.* He presents before us the pure, free, perfect, eternall, and constant love of Christ towards his Church, with all his incomparable and heavenly riches, wisdom, beauty, and graces by that amiable and pleasant, that sweet and comfortable allegory of a marriage long; to the end, that he might carry up the soule to things of a divine and heavenly nature. The holy Ghost doth many times frame arguments most suitable to the nature of man, as that in the Prophet Hosea 11. 4. *I drew them with the cords of a man, with bands of love, &c.* That is, as if the Lord had said, I used arguments suitable to mans nature; I did not use violence and rigour, but rather chose to overcome them with mercy and loving kindnesse.

Secondly, We have the transcendent excellency of this song.

A song of songs: That is, the chiefeest and most excellent song; for by doubling of the words, the Scripture useth, when it speaketh of good things, to understand most excellent things, as *Deut. 10. 17. The Lord your God is God of Gods, and Lord of Lords.* That is to say, most high Lord and God; and whereas it speak of base things, it doth on the other side by doubling debase them as much, as *Gen. 9. 25. A servant of servants shall he be.* That is, he shall be a most vile and base servant. In like manner it is spoken of Christ, *Revel. 19. 16, 17. The King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.* That is, the most high and mighty King, and supream Lord of all. The doubling of
the

the words make an Hebrew superlative, by which this is noted to be the chiefeſt ſong.

Fiſt, of all *Solomons* other ſongs, for hee made a thouſand and five, 1 *King.* 4. 32.

Secondly, of all other ſongs in Scripture: *David* was the ſweet ſinger of *Israel* in his time, and had his golden *Pſalms*; beſides many other ſongs there be in Scripture, and all of them very precious: yet this ſong excelleth them all, and that in theſe reſpects.

Fiſt, Becauſe this ſong ſpeaketh of *Chriſt's* love to his Church, and the Churches love to *Chriſt* more largely, ſweetly, and comfortably then any other ſong in Scripture: and by ſuch allegories and amiable reſemblances, taken from the moſt beautifull and ſtateliſt things under heaven; the ſweeteſt, the richeſt, and the moſt precious things that are found among men, as the richeſt Jewels, the ſweeteſt Spices, Gardens, Orchards, Vineyards, Wine-fellers, and the like: theſe with the like ſet forth and expreſſe the ſpirituall and heavenly Ornaments and Jewels which *Chriſt* beſtoweth upon his Church, with the fruits of her love to him again.

Secondly, This ſong admitteth more variety of interpretation then any other: ſome underſtand it of the Catholicke Church, ſome of particular Churches, from *Solomons* time to the laſt judgment, ſome of the mutuall affection and love between *Chriſt* and every Believer: We deny not, but that there may be uſefull truths in each one of theſe interpretations; but ſure it is, that all, or the moſt paſſages of this ſong will very well agree to the ſpirituall ſtate

of the Church in every age of the world.

Thirdly, The difficulty and hardnesse of this song, which ariseth from these grounds.

First, The sodain change of the number, tense, and person, as now speaking singularly, then plurally; now in the present time, then in the time to come.

Secondly, In that there are severall persons speaking, now the Bride, then the Bridegroom, and sometimes the friends of them both, *viz.* the daughters of *Jerusalem*.

Thirdly, In respect of all those parabolicall and enigmaticall phrases and dark speeches, wherein is contained very divine and heavenly matter.

The *Jewes* had this song in such reverence and high esteem, that none of them would read or study it, untill they were thirty years of age.

Now forasmuch as this song excells all other in the Scripture, in that it celebrateth the mysteries of Christ and his Church, and the conjunction between them, more amply and excellently then any other;

Observe, *That this song of Solomon is a most excellent portion of canonicall Scripture.* It were horrid blasphemy to prefer this song above all the songs in Scripture, if it were not given by divine inspiration as well as they.

First, The title of this Book is, as a crown of glory set upon the head of it, and is as ancient, and of as great authority as the book it self: Now if this song were not canonical, we should make all the songs in Scripture in comparison, to come behind a humane love-song.

Secondly,

Secondly, If we consider the divine and heavenly matter contained in this song : it takes the best things in the course of nature, and applies them to a most divine use ; but of this wee have spoken already.

Thirdly, If we consider that speech in *Chap. 7. 4.* *Thy nose is like to the tower of Lebanon.* Now the tower of *Lebanon* was not built untill a long time after *Solomon* had married with *Pharaoh's* Daughter : beside, how odious and unseemly would the comparison have been, if it had been made in respect of *Solomon's* wife.

Fourthly, The description of the Bride and the Bridegroom are so transcendent and excellent, that they cannot be applyed to any, but to Christ and his Church : And although none of the ten proper names in Hebrew be once named in this song ; yet this Book is full of such names, as doe most of all suit with the argument thereof, as *King, Welbeloved, Brother, Shepherd, the chiefe of ten thousand, &c.* That most excellent shining glory, dignity, and Majesty, which is here put upon the Bridegroom, can belong to none beside Christ. And as for the Bride, shee is described by such rare beauty and glory, which cannot agree with *Pharaoh's* daughter : for how is shee compared with all that dwell under *Solomon's* Curtain ? and how is she found black, parched with the sunne, and afflicted by her Brethren ?

Fifthly, It is manifest that Christ and his Apostles made use of this Book by applying the phrases, and borrowing of matter and frame of speech from it, as in *Chap. 1. 2.* *Draw me, &c.* Suitable to that are the words of Christ, in *Joh. 6. 44.* *None can come to me,*

unlesse the father draw him. Again in vers. 9. Behold him through the casement, looking through the grates, &c. Agreeable is this, to that of the Apostle, in 2 Cor. 3. 18. We behold the glory of the Lord as through a glasse, or casement. See also the title which Christ giveth his Church, in Chap. 5. 2. calling her undefiled, agreeable to the Apostle, who would present the Church to Christ, as a chaste and pure Virgin.

These places, with many other, which might be brought, do clearly demonstrate what a sympathy and agreement there is between this song and the new Testament, and with the matter and manner of phrase alledged there, by Christ and his Apostles.

Sixthly, There would be open contradictions found to be in this song, if it were applyed to any other then Christ and his Church; for how can it be said of *Pharaoh's daughter*, that shee is *the only child of her mother*, Chap. 5. 6. when in the last Chapter, that she had a *little sister*? Now concerning the heavenly *Jerusalem*, shee is called *the mother of us all*, and the Church is but one in Christ: but in respect of those severall congregations that the Church is divided into, she may be said to have many sisters; and thus according to the right interpretation, we see a harmonious agreement in this seeming contradiction. I might bring many more arguments to prove this song to be an excellent part of canonicall Scripture, but I forbear, forasmuch as the severall passages of it will agree to the experience of the best Christians: wherefore it will be worth our time and paines to read, study, and meditate in this most excellent portion of holy writ; and when we come to understand
this

this song clearly, wee shall be forced to confesse, that there is not such choise and heavenly matter, neither the like sweetness and comfort in any song, as in this *song of songs*.

Thirldy, we have the Author of this Song (*which is Solomons*)

Solomon was the greatest son of wisdome among men, whose understanding was as large as the Sea, 1 King. 4. 29, 30. And whose affections were as large as his understanding: hee is made the holy Ghost's instrument for the composing of this excellent song of songs. A man of the deepest apprehension is made use of in the highest matters, to wit, the intercourse of love betwixt the Lord Christ and his Spouse.

Solomon was a type of Christ:

First, In that he had his name of peace, which is called in Hebrew *Shelomoh*, but after the Greek *Solomon*, peaceable, for he was a man of peace and rest; and God said of him, *Solomon shall be his name, and I will give him (Salom) peace and quietnesse unto Israel in his dayes*, 1 Chron. 22. 9. Which promise was made good, as wee read in 1 King. 4. 24. *Hee had peace on all sides round about him*. Now Christ is our Prince of peace, Isa. 9. 6. and is called by the Apostle *our peace*, Ephes. 2. 14. That is, he is the author and cause of all our peace; he is the cement, the only tie, and ground of all that peace and union between God and us, and also between the *Jewes* and *Gentiles* bringing them into fellowship and communion one with another.

2. *Solomon* surpassed all the Kings of the earth in riches and wisdome. 2 Chr. 9. 22. *And all the earth sought*

sought the face of Solomon, to heare his wisdome which God had put in his heart, 1 King. 10. 24. He was the wisest of all Kings, as we see in 1 King. 3. 12. There was none like him, before him, neither after him shall any arise like unto him. He was also the wisest Prophet, whose heart was lifted up higher then the sun, and who had received a large measure of the spirit of Prophecie from the Lord : but yet behold Jesus Christ, a greater then Solomon, Matth. 12. 42. For in him are the treasures of wisdome, Col. 2. 3. That is, Christ had in him the perfection of all wisdome and knowledg : and the Apostle calleth him in 1 Cor. 1. 24. *The wisdome of God.* Christ is essentiall wisdome and understanding : *Counsell is mine, and sound wisdome* (saith he) *I am understanding*, Prov. 8. 14. This song therefore is commended unto us by the holy Ghost, in the highest degree of excellency, in respect of the Author, who was such an eminent type of Christ both in peace and wisdome.

Observe from hence, *that Solomon is a canonized Saint*, else he had not been the Pen-man of Canonick Scripture, and so to have been a Scribe of the holy Ghost : The Apostle Peter speaks thus of all the holy Prophets and Pen-men of holy writ, in his 2 Epist. Chap. 1. vers. 20, 21. *First know this, that no prophecie in the Scripture is of any private interpretation; For prophecie came not in old time by the will of man : but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the holy Ghost.* Now Solomon being one of those holy men of God, he must need be a deare and beloved Saint of God.

2. Hee was a most excellent type and figure of the *Messiah's* in love, peace, wisdome, and glory :
and

and Christ himfelfe is called *Solomon*, in *Chap. 3. 11.* It would be therefore more then absurd rashneffe to conclude him a reprobate.

3. The promise which God makes to *David*, that if *Solomon* sinned, hee should be chastised, but that God would never take away his mercy cleane from him, as he did from *Saul*, 2 Sam. 7. 14, 15. This cannot be meant of succession in the Kingdome; for it would have been no comfort to have enjoyed the Kingdome for a while, and afterwards to perish for ever; therefore it must be taken for a promise of an estate of life.

4. God speaks well of *Solomon* after his death, making an honorable mention of his name, & joyns him with his Father *David*; the Lord commending *Rehoboam* & his people for their first 3. years government, 2 Chr. 11. 17. *Three years long they walked (saith the Lord) in the way of David and Solomon.* Now God never made any such honourable mention of a reprobate after his death, in all the Scripture.

5. Consider that name of love and favour which God gave unto him, *Jedidiah*, beloved of God.

6. *Solomon* himself is said to have loved the Lord, 1 King. 3. 3. which thing being true (else it would not have been recorded in Scripture) he could never fall finally from God.

7. It is said in *Luk. 13. 28.* that *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, and the Prophets (of which number *Solomon* is one) are in the Kingdom of God: Yet the false Prophets are excepted, as *Balaam*, by whom God spake sometimes in a compulsitory way; but the Lord used no such instruments to be Pen-men of the holy Ghost.

8. And

8. And lastly, his owne 3. Bookes evince his repentance and reconciliation with God : For this glorious light of Israel for a season was clouded and overshadowed by Idolatry; for it is said, *Solomon worshipped strange gods.* Now upon these words the Romanists conclude, that *Solomon* died a reprobate; but Mr. Broughton is of another opinion concerning these words : *I have oftentimes mused (saith hee) what should be the meaning of these words, And Solomon worshipped strange gods. For (saith he) I could never thinke that he could esteem the idolls of the heathen for gods, considering he had such wonderfull knowledge, but surely this is the meaning; that by allowing his Concubines to worship them, and in that it was done by his Commandement, it was as his act; and this I hold, till I be better instructed. If he had come to so open a folly, as to worship them as God, this his sinne must needs have been of very high nature, if not the sinne against the holy Ghost, which is unpardonable.*

Brought. generall view of the Scriptures, p. 155.

But however it must be confessed, that *Solomon* fell grievously by giving the reins to his lusts; yet, as it was said already, his 3. last Books will declare what the frame and temper of his spirit was in his old age.

1. The book of the *Proverbs*, wherein by allegories taken from the most excellent of the creatures, and also from those of the lowest ranke and esteem, he sheweth the wisdom of God in the government of the world : from whence hee perswades men to seek after the wisdom of God, admonishes the people to beware of strange women, and labours to settle them in the grounds of Religion.

2. His Booke called the *Preacher*, which book
was

was made in his old age, and after his recovery out of sin: he beginneth, *Vanity of vanities, all is but vanity*, saith the Preacher. He preached worldly vanity from selfe-experience, admonishing others to beware by his evill. In which Book he sheweth in generall the transitory estate of all things in the world. For, saith he, consider the Sun, *it riseth and setteth, and returneth again to his place. The winde goeth toward the South, and turneth about into the North: it whirleth about continually, and it returns again according to his circuits. All the rivers run into the Sea, yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again.* So by this he sheweth, that there is no felicity in any thing under the sun, but all is vanity. He goes on, and tries wisdom and knowledg; but saith he, *in much wisdom is much griefe, and he that encreaseth knowledge, encreaseth sorrow.* He went yet further, and tryed all pleasant things; for (saith he) *I made great works, I built houses, set Gardens and Orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits. I made mee pooles of water, &c.* In a word, I was full, and much encreased, I wanted nothing that my heart could desire: but when I began to consider what felicity these things could bring unto mee, I beheld nothing but vanity and vexation of spirit, and that there was no profit under the Sun.

3. This most divine song penned (as was hinted before) in his old age: his affections and his mind is taken up in contemplating and celebrating those sweet mysteries of Christ and his Church, and of that intercourse of love passing between them: his heart is now lifted up higher then all the things

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under the Sun, reckoning of them nothing but vanity and vexation of spirit. Now by, what hath been said, wee may conclude *Solomon* a glorious Saint of God, and therefore should be stirred up to the study and meditation of this Book the more, for *Solomon's* sake, the Pen-man thereof.

CHAP. I.

VERS. 2, 3.

Let him kisse mee with the kisses of his mouth ; for thy love is better then wine.

Because of the savour of thy good ointments ; thy name is as ointment poured forth , therefore doe the Virgins love thee.

IN this Chapter observe two parts.

1. The earnest desire of the Church to be effectually joyned unto Christ, and to enjoy his presence; that she might have sweet and most comfortable communion with her head and Spouse, and this is from *vers. 2.* to the end of *vers. 7.*

2. There is contained the ready offer of Christ to entertain and embrace his beloved Church, together with a mutuall commendation one of another, and both setting forth the praises of each other, from *vers. 8.* to the end of the Chapter.

In the first part observe,

1. The Churches earnest wishes and desires, *vers. 2, 3, 4.*

2. She preventeth some objections that might be made against her, *vers. 5, 6, 7.*

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The earnest desire of the Church is set down under the similitude of a lover.

*Let him kisse mee with the kisses of his mouth,
&c.*

In this *Vers.* observe two things.

1. The Churches prayer or request to Christ, in these words, *Let him kisse me, &c.*

2. The reason of her prayer, wherein shee sets forth the excellency of Christs love, in these words, *For thy love is better then wine.*

To *kisse* in the Scripture noteth 3. things.

1. It noteth worship and service, as we have it in the Prophet *Hosea*, Chap. 13. *vers.* 2. *Let the men that sacrifice kisse the calves*; it being an act and token of worship and religious honour. See also in *1 Ki.* 19. 18. *Yet I have left me* (saith God) *seven thousand in Israel, which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which have not kissed him.* That is, that have not so much revered or honored *Baal*, as to kisse him.

2. To *kisse* is an expression of duty and obedience; thus *Samuel* kissed *Saul*, when he had annointed him King of *Israel*, *1 Sam.* 10. 1. This he did, as a token of obedience: this is that duty towards Christ, expressed in *Psal.* 2. 9. *Kisse the sonne*: That is, yield all obedience to him, regard the law of his mouth, be instructed, counselled, and commanded by him.

3. To *kisse* is a symbole & pledg of love; therefore the Christians of the Primitive time used such expressions of love in their love-feasts: and this is injoynd by the Apostle as an expression of Christian

love, and as a sign of their unity and onenesse, and of that Christian tye, whereby they stood bound one to another.

The last of these serves for our purpose; for in these words, *Let him kisse me, &c.*

The Church desires that the sweet and comfortable pledges of Christs love may be given in unto her.

By a metonymie, she putteth the signe for the thing signified; for a kisse is but a pledge of that love of Christ, which she desires to be made a partaker of. Here we have an exclamation, full of spirituall passions and divine love; with which the Church is enflamed, and as it were impatient in her desires, after a nearer conjunction with Christ. Let us see it farther, what that is which the Church so earnestly desires, in the following words.

With the kisses of his mouth.

The Church doth not say, with the kisses of his lips, for that is a more silent and still gesture; but *the kisses of his mouth*, which is no superfluous speech here; but it implyeth the heavenly & gracious speeches which proceed out of Christs mouth. *Grace was in Christs lips*, Psal. 45. 3. All Christs affections were sweet, and his heart was a treasure of divine grace: his mouth then by which hee utters the things that are in his heart, must needs be sweet and desireable.

Qu. *But was ever the Spouse of Christ without all pledges of his love? or, was shee ever without the word? for shee seemeth to cry after that which shee had not?*

Answer. Christ did alwayes kisse his beloved Spouse

Spouſe with ſome of the kiſſes of his mouth ; but he let out his light, *minuatim*, by little and little, as it were by degrees.

The promiſe was firſt made to *Adam* in the ſeed of the woman. After this, the promiſe was renewed again with *Abraham* : And after that the children of *Iſrael* were come out of *Ægypt*, his Lawes and Ordinances were more fully delivered by *Moses*, but as yet all things were under figures and ſhadowes ; the Church was as a child in her non-age, and in that reſpect the Apoſtle ſaith, they were *under tutors and governors, untill the time appointed of the Father*, Gal. 4. 1, 2. And in Chap. 3. 23, 24. he ſaith, they were *kept under the law, ſhut up unto the faith, which ſhould afterwards be revealed* ; which law was a *School-maſter unto Chriſt*. In this reſpect the Apoſtle ſaith ; that the heirs of life and ſalvation were but *Children* before Chriſts Incarnation, becauſe in generall they knew but as children, for that we have done ſince : beſides other points of minority touching legality and ceremonies, which the Apoſtle in the afore-cited place calls elements or rudiments ; ſo that their light was but an obſcure & glimmering light to ours now in the dayes of the Goſpel. Chriſts diſcovery of himſelf then was but a *ſtanding behind the wall, a looking forth of the window, a ſhewing himſelfe through the lattice*, Cant. 2. 9. So although the godly in the time of the Prophets ſaw the promiſes afar off, and embraced them : yet they had them but in the expectation, not in the enjoyment : they had the promiſes in reſpect of the benefit, but not in the perfection of them. *Theſe* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *received not the promiſe : God having provided ſome bet-*

Heb. 11. 39.

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ter things for us, that they without us should not be made perfect. Now the Prophets fore-saw and prophesied of the rising of the sun of Righteousnesse, that bright morning star, who would make glorious discoveries of heavenly light: and they also prophesied of the powring forth of the spirit of wisdom, and of revelation after Christ's comming in the flesh: and hence it is, that many Kings, and Prophets, and righteous men desired to see Christs day, and saw it not, Luk. 10. 24.

This is one of the kisses of Christs mouth, which the Church did so vehemently desire, saying, *Let him kisse me*, &c. Whereby the Church desireth to have Christ manifested in the flesh, and to have the sweet and comfortable Doctrines of the Gospel applyed to her heart, and that shee might not be alwayes under a legall dispensation, for the law *worketh wrath*, Rom. 4. 15. It was a *ministration of death*, 2 Cor. 3. 8. for the tenour of it runs thus, *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things, that are written in the book of the law*, Gal. 3. 10. But (saith the Apostle) *after that faith is come, we are no longer under a School-master*, Gal. 3. 25. That is, now we are not as children in knowledg and understanding, that wee should need a School-master; but we are as men of riper years, and as men grown in knowledg, by the cleare light and sun-shine of the Gospel: so the Church desireth here, that shee might be prevented with the grace of Christ, and have the feeling of his love and favour towards her.

For thy loves are better then wine.

Here the Church rendereth a reason of that her most earnest desire, which shee hath to be joyhed with Christ, and enjoy a more full and neer communion with him.

Thy loves, &c.

By *loves* she meaneth favour and acceptance: and she speaketh in the plurall number.

1. To declare the plentifulnesse of Christs love, and withall that great comfort and joy she received by the abundance thereof.

2. In that she had not Christs love only, but also the fruits thereof, namely, her love to *Christ*, *Christs* love to her being as the cause; her love to *Christ*, as the effect; her love to *Christ* a reflection of his love, wherewith he loved her first, according to that in 1 *John* 4. 19. *Wee love him, because he first loved us.*

(better then wine) or, good more then wine.

The word *good* is of a large extent, and is used for that which is fair, sweet, pleasing, profitable or commodious, causing joy and comfort. The same word is used in *Gen.* 24. 16. where it is said, *the Damsell was faire to looke upon.* That is, shee was of a good countenance. And we have the same word in *Esther* 1. 10. where it is said; *the Kings heart was merry with wine.* So that by good, the Church meaneth profitable, sweet, pleasant, comfortable, and full of salvation; for it is the love of election, of adoption, justification, of righteousnesse and sanctification, and therefore a very sweet and comfortable love.

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Est bonus, utilis, jucundus, suavis, pulcher, laus, commodus, ap-
tus, idoneus, beatus fuit.

Better then wine.

Wine is one of the most precious, comfortable, and delightfull creatures that is in the world. It is here put synecdochically, as one pleasant species or kind for all the rest: and because Wine is the principall thing in Feasts and Banquets, it is here put for all dainty, pleasant, sweet & comfortable meats and drinks, used in the banquets of the great ones of the world.

The *Verse* being thus opened, let us draw some Observations from it.

Obser. 1. That such as have the least tast of Christ's love are impatient and restless in their desires after the nearest fellowship and communion with him. Hence it is, that the Spouse here breaketh forth into such a speech with an exclamation, being full as it were of divine passions, and of enflamed love, saying, *let him kisse mee*, &c. This was grounded upon some taste of Christ's love; for Christ had not spoken as yet to the Spouse; but shee on a sudden (as it were) without any word from Christ, utters this vehement exclamation of hers, and that without any other ground, then that *his love is better then wine*. See this in the Apostle: he counted all things but dung, *on vbara*, dogs-meat, that he might win or gain Christ: that is, that he might get more neerer communion with him; and that hee might be satisfied with a larger portion of his fulnesse: and yet the Apostle goes higher then this, and desires *to be dissolved, and to be with Christ*, that so hee might enjoy the highest communion of all. The Church here desires Christ's manifestation in the flesh, that shee might

might enjoy him in a Gospel-dispensation, and have sweeter discoveries of his favour: so in like manner the Church of the New Testament, who did enjoy all the priviledges of the Gospel; yet she goes higher in her affections, and desires Christs last comming, that so she might enjoy him in that heavenly & everlasting communion, which the Saints shall enjoy hereafter.

2. Observe; that *Christ hath given more sweet and comfortable pledges of love and reconciliation to his people under the Gospel, then he did under the Law.*

Hence it is, that Christ telleth his Disciples, and saith, *Blessed are the eyes that see that yee see.* For I tell you, many Prophets and Kings have desired to see those things which yee see, and have not seen them: and to hear those things which yee heare, and have not heard them, Luk. 10. 24. To this purpose is that of the Apostle, in Heb. 12. 18, 19, 20. For you are not come unto the mount not to be touched, and that burned with fire: Nor unto blacknesse, and darknesse, and tempest, and the sound of a Trumpet, & the voyce of words, &c. By the mount is mount-Sinai, whereon the law was given: and by all those expressions of darknes and tempest, and fire; wee are given to understand the slavish, servile, and fearfull condition of them who were under the law: and how farre short their condition came of the excellency of our condition, who are under the Gospel. And hee saith further, Vers. 22. *But yee are come unto mount Sion, and unto the City of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable company of Angels: to the generall Assembly, and Church of the first-born which are written in heaven, &c.* By mount-Sion he meaneth the Church under the

Gospel, whereof mount-Sion was a type, *Psal.* 14. 7. And the Doctrine of the Gospel was to goe out of Sion, *Isa.* 2. 3. And by all the other expressions he sheweth the happy condition of them, who are under the Gospel. It is the same argument for substance, that the Apostle uses in *Rom.* 6. 14. *For sinne shall not have dominion over you, for yee are not under the law, but under grace.* That is, now having such manifestations of grace under the Gospel : sin shall not take such advantages against you, as to keep you under, or to enthrall you, as it did those under the Law.

Againe, Christ hath powred out a greater measure of his spirit on his people, now in the times of the Gospel, then before. The Saints of old have had the same spirit for substance, but not for measure ; the spirit was given out unto them by small drops ; but in the times of the Gospel it was *powred out in showers and abundance*, *Tit.* 3. 6. The word translated abundantly signifies *Riches*, which notes not only the pretiousnesse, but the plenty and superabundancy thereof. And it is said, *when hee* (meaning Christ) *ascended up on high, and led captivity captive, he did withall give gifts unto men*, *Ephes.* 4. 8. In these words the Apostle alludeth to an old custome of the *Jewes*, who in dayes of great joy and solemnity, did use to send gifts and presents one to another, as we read in *Neh.* 8. 10. 12. *The people did eate and drinke and send portions.* This the people did in token of their joy after their redemption from captivity. So when Christ ascended up on high, as in the day of his Majesty and Inauguration in his Kingly seat and Chariot of triumph ; he sent plentiful

plentifull portions and gifts of his holy spirit into the hearts of his people. Now in that Christ powrs out more abundantly of his spirit in the days of the Gospel then before; the spirit of evidence and demonstration, the spirit of revelation and knowledg as it is called in 1 Cor. 2. Herein Christ hath given more pledges of his love in the times of the Gospel, then in the times of the law.

Lastly, The will and mind of God is more fully, and more plainly revealed to his people under the Gospel, then it was under the Law: God let out light by little, and little, till the sun of righteousness arose. So we have it in Heb. 1. 1. *God spake unto the Fathers by the Prophets at sundry times; and in divers manners; but in these dayes he hath spoken by his sonne*, Verf. 2. That is, he hath spoken more fully and plainly.

The antithesis or opposition which the Apostle sets between Gods speaking by the Prophets of old, and by his Son in the latter age of the world, shews plainly the dimnesse and darknesse of those former ages in comparifon of those, which have been since the comming of Christ.

3. In that the word of the Gospel is called the kisse of Christs mouth,

Observ. That the Doctrine of the Gospel is very sweet and desirable.

From hence it is, that David doth so highly commend the holy Doctrine of the Lord, that it is perfect, pure, and infallible, and of such mighty operation and effects, that he saith, *it is more to be desired then gold, yea then much fine gold, sweeter then the honey or the honey-comb*, Psal. 19. In the Originall the

words run thus, *sweeter then the dropping of the honey-combs*: It is meant of that which commeth forth without pressing, and therefore counted the sweetest and purest honey of all other.

All the Epithites given in Scripture unto the Gospel do shew, that it is sweet and comfortable; it is called *the good word of God*, Heb. 6. 5. *A good doctrine*, 1 Tim. 4. 6. *A faithfull saying, and worthy of all acceptation*, 1 Tim. 1. 15. *The word of life*, Phil. 2. 16. *The word of reconciliation*, 2 Cor. 5. 19. *The Gospel of peace*, Ephes. 2. 17. *The Gospel of salvation, and the word of truth*, Eph. 1. 13.

Besides, the Gospel brings glorious effects along with it; as liberty to Captives, and blessed joy and comfort to those in distresse, as in *Isa. 61. 1, 2*. It is *tidings of great joy*, viz. of reconciliation to God by Christ, and of peace and joy in the holy Ghost.

It is no other then the sweet kisses of Christs mouth; and those heavenly Oracles of his mouth, whereby he calleth, enlightneth, comforteth, and worketh faith in his people. Christs affections were (as I may so speak) dyed in love and sweetness: and his heart was as a fountain of grace, therefore needs must his mouth be sweet, which is (as it were) the instrument by which he utters what is in his heart. Christ conveyeth all his graces and all good things into his people by the word of his mouth. No marvail then, though the Church be enflamed with the desire of the kisses of his mouth.

4. Observe from the reason which the Church renders of her most earnest longings and desires after Christ: *For thy loves, &c.*

That

That *those strong desires, and those earnest longings of the faithfull after Christ, they flow from a principle of love.*

Love is impulsive and constraining, it hath a sweet kind of violence to draw out all the affections of the soule unto Christ; see this in 2 Cor. 5. 15. *The love of Christ constrains us*, saith the Apostle. So again in Jer. 31. 3. *I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with mercies have I drawn thee*, saith the Lord. And in Hos. 11. 4. *I drew them with the cords of a man, with bands of love, &c.*

Now wee must understand this principle of love to be, either Christs love to us, or our love to him; for there is an interchange of spiritual love between Christ and his people. First, Christs love to us (in respect of the extrinsicall part of it) is the expressing of his love to us by the evident testimonies of his favour & grace: and by uniting of himselfe unto us, making of us to partake with himselfe of his own goodnesse. Now by the manifestation of Christs love to us, he begets in our souls a love of him: his love is, as the cause, our love as the effect: and as Solomon saith of the rivers, *that they both come from, and return again into the Sea*, Eccles. 1. 7. So Christ is the ocean of spiritual love, from whence we derive, and into which we return our love: so that our love proceeds from Christ's love; his love is as a load-stone, attractive, drawing our affections to him; our love is as the reflecting backe to him again the beames of his owne love.

Now that principle of love by which wee are drawn to Christ, is both Christ's love to us, and the
fruits

fruits thereof, namely our love to him. Now there are three things in love, whereby the affections of the soule are drawn unto Christ.

1. An affection of the will, whereby we are inclined unto the thing beloved: Now the nature of the will is *elicitā*, not *coactā*, inclined and drawn forth, not compelled and constrained; will should be no will, if it were so: but there is that divine excellency, & that excellent dignity in Christ, which is as a load-stone, very attractive, & an object very tempting and alluring to bend, to draw, and to incline the will, making of it to close with Christ, as with the best, and most excellent object in all the world.

2. A desire of union and enjoyment of the thing beloved. Now when the soule eyes such an excellent object as Christ is, in respect of his spirituall beauty, and super-eminent worthinesse and dignity: it presently covets the enjoyment and function of him; the soule desires nothing more then union, then peculiarity and interest, then the everlasting possession of him, who is that love-deserving object.

3. A complacency or well-pleasednesse, whereby we rest our selves well pleased in the goodnesse of the thing beloved: now nothing in the world is more pleasing to a believing soule then Christ: so that let his dispensations be what they will, his Saints are never weary of him. *Yea, they take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for his sake: and when they be weak in themselves, then they are strong in him, and more then Conquerours,* as saith the Apostle. Now by these 3.

acts

acts or effects in love, are the affections of Believers eminently drawn out toward Christ.

5. Observe from her form of speech (*thy loves*) speaking in the plurall number.

That the love of God in Christ is an infinite, and a manifest love.

The Apostle would have the *Ephesians* to comprehend with all *Saints*, the breadth, and length, the depth and height of the love of God in Christ: but yet for all that he concludes, that it *passeth knowledge*, Ephes. 3. 18, 19. God's love is of one nature and substance, but it is various in respect of the dispensations thereof. Love is an internall affection in God, and therefore it passeth understanding; so that we cannot conceive of it as it is in it selfe: but onely wee know and understand it according to the dispensations thereof. Now the acts, or the effects of Gods love in Christ are various and many, *viz.*

1. His electing love, whereby he hath predestinated a certain number of men, that the glorious grace of God might be manifested in them, see Ephes. 1. 4, 5, 6. The Apostle saith, *God hath chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: who hath predestinated us to be adopted through Jesus Christ unto himselfe, according to the good pleasure of his will: To the praise of the glory of his grace, whereby hee hath made us accepted in the beloved.* Here we see the first act of Gods love in choosing of his before the foundation of the world; and that (saith the Apostle) according to his purpose, Ephes. 1. 11.

2. His redeeming love whereby he hath brought us from the bondage of sinne, into glorious liberty and.

and freedome. Our redemption was a full testimony of his love, as appears by these Scriptures following. Gal. 4. 4. *For when the fulnesse of time was come, God sent forth his sonne, made of a woman, made under the law, that wee might receive the adoption of sonnes.* So in Act. 20. 28. *The Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.* And in 1 Tim. 2. 6. *The man Christ, who gave himselfe a price of our redemption.* This was a plain demonstration of Gods love in Christ; for saith the Apostle, *God shewed his love to us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ dyed for us.*

3. Gods love of calling; now there is a double calling, an inward and an outward; the outward is a bare propounding of the Gospel; but the inward call is a spirituall enlightning, whereby the soule is enlightned by the spirit of wisdome and revelation, *to know the hope of his calling,* Ephes. 1. 17. And that whereby the soule is made able to apprehend him, of whom it is apprehended, Phil. 3. 12. This is that grace begotten in the will of man (that being the proper subject of this grace) by which meanes the whole man is converted unto God.

4. We have Gods justifying love, whereby he doth free and discharge his people from sinne and death, and accounts them righteous in Christ.

5. His adopting love, whereby he accepts the faithfull, unto the dignity of sonnes. John 1. 12. *As many as received him, to them he gave power to be made the sonnes of God, to those that believe in his name.* Now Christ is the band of this union; for by him we come to be made *heirs of God, Co-heirs with Christ,* Rom. 8. 17. This excellent dignity is procured for

us by Christ, as a Redeemer. *Gal. 4. 5, 6. God sent his sonne, &c. to redeeme them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sonnes: And because yee are sonnes, God hath sent forth the spirit of his sonne into your hearts, crying abba, Father.* Observe here, that the spirit of adoption is called the spirit of the sonne, because the holy Ghost sealeth up our adoption in Christ, so that through Christ it is made sure unto us.

6. His sanctifying love, whereby he doth free Believers from the filthinesse and pollution of sinne, and restore in them again the image of God, which consisteth of righteousnesse and holinesse, *Eph. 4. 24.*

7. And lastly, his glorifying love, whereby he lifts up his people unto that state of life and glory, and gives them an immortall inheritance, where all comfort, peace, and joy shall abound, and where they shall have the communion of the chiefest good, *viz.* the love of God shining forth immediately upon their hearts. Now though the loue of God in Christ be one intire, single, and internall act: yet after the manner of our conceiving, it is set forth by diverse externall acts or effects. And wee must know, that all these effects flow from that originall love of God; these are but new acts, proceeding from that eternall love of God, which was in his own breast from eternity.

6. Observe, *That the sence and feeling of Christs love is more excellent and efficacious unto Believers, then all the most pleasant and delightfull things in the world. The Church doth preferre it beyond all comparison of worldly things, saying, Thy loves are better then wine.*

Now what is more pleasing and delightfull to the tast, then fragrant wine? yet Christ's love is the same, and far sweeter to the hearts of Believers. Wine is ex-

ceeding usefull and comfortable to man ; but Christ exceeds in his usefulness to the soule : so that look, of what use or vertue wine is to man, of the same use and vertue is Christ to his people. The properties or vertues of wine are such as these.

1. *Wine delighteth the heart of man*, Psal. 104. 15. And in Eccles. 10. 19. *Wine maketh merry* : That is, it doth refresh, comfort, and make glad the heart of man : so Christ gives his people comfort and refreshment in the midst of feares and dangers : Hee is that *Shilo*, which brings tranquillity and peace unto his Saints ; he refreshes them with living waters, even with the sweet communion of his spirit, and with the abundance of his graces.

2. *Wine causeth to forget affliction and misery*, Prov. 31. 6, 7. In like manner the love of Christ causeth us to forget those things that are behind, Phil. 3. 13. And the Apostle saith of himselfe, *that he doth now rejoyce in his sufferings*, Col. 1. 24. The sweetnesse and the joy that he found in Christs love, did swallow up all the bitternesse and sorrow of his afflictions.

3. *Wine was used in the legal sacrifices and service of God*, Numb. 15. 5. Thus was Christ's love manifested by a sacrifice in himselfe, by which we draw abundance of comfort to our selves. 2 Cor. 1. 5. *As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation aboundeth by Christ*. This consolation is much more then was in all legall sacrifices, which could never make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience, Heb. 9. 1.

4. Wine enflames and overcommeth ; therefore saith the Apostle, *be not drunke with wine*, Ephes. 5. 18. But (saith he) *be filled with the spirit* ; that is, let the
com-

comforts and graces of Christ's spirit fill and overcome your hearts.

5. Wine is put for all delicate, comfortable or costly things in the world, which the greatest sort of men doe use in their Feasts, *Isa. 25. 6.* The Lord promiseth to make *a feast of fat things; a feast of wines on the lees.* He alludeth to the practice of great Kings of the earth, and delicate persons, which follow their pleasures, and have their sweet wines, &c. But yet they find not so much delight and comfort in their Feasts, as the Saints do in the love of Jesus Christ.

Hence it is, that the Church cryeth out with desire to enjoy her beloved, rendring this reason, that his *love is better then wine*; that is, better then all the sweet and costly things that the Princes of the earth do enjoy. Thus we have heard the Churches desire of fellowship with Christ; and the reason of her request, drawn from the excellency of his love: now it follows in the next *verse*, she rendereth a reason of her so much delighting in his love.

VERS. 3.

Because of the savour of thy good ointments, thy name is an ointment powred forth, therefore the Virgins love thee.

IN these words she rendereth a reason why her affections were so set upon her beloved, and why shee doth so love him, and why shee preferres his love above all the glory and pleasures of this world; her reason is drawn from the excellency of Christ: that he is as a boxe of odoriferous ointment, and that

in him was found redolent savours, and precious sweet things, by which he doth perfume her with his spirituall smells, and so maketh her sweet also.

This verse contains two things.

1. A cause, or reason of her delight in Christ's love; *because of thy ointments, &c.*

2. An effect flowing from the cause; *therefore doe the virgins love thee.*

Because of the savour, &c.

ריח
Odoratus
est, olfecit,
sensit.

By *savour, smell, or odour*, is meant knowledg, understanding, sense, or feeling; the Apostle calleth it, *the savour of life*, 2 Cor. 2. 14. So it is said, when the tow smelleth the fire, it is broken, *Judg.* 16. 9. The meaning is, when it feeleth the fire.

Of thy good ointments, or good oiles.

שמן
Pinguedo,
oleum, un-
guentum.

In this comparison shee seemeth, not only to meane those ordinary confections in the Apothecaries shop; but the holy ointment and perfume which God commanded *Moses* to make, with which the Tabernacle and the ministring Vessels were annointed, and also *Aaron* and his sons, *Exod.* 30. 22, 24, 25. And we read in *Psal.* 133. that this ointment was powred upon the head of *Aaron*, and went down to the skirts of his cloathing. By this similitude the Church commendeth the graces of Christ which he had, being cloathed with the holy spirit; for the Lord anointed him *with the oyle of gladnesse above his fellowes*, *Psal.* 45. 7. And saith God *I will put my spirit upon you*, *Isa.* 42. 1. And it is said of him, *The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath annointed me to preach the Gospel*, *Isa.* 61. 1. Now the odour of Christ's graces are smelt and become savoury by

by the preaching of the Gospel : and therefore shee ad-
deth.

Thy name is as ointment , &c.

Concerning what is meant here by Christs *name*, we may take a double interpretation.

1. By *name*, we may understand it, of those proper names given to Christ in Scripture. As *Messias*, and *Christ*, which are by interpretation *annointed* ; these names are given to Christ by way of excellency, he being annointed by the Father unto that great Office of his Mediator-ship : and he is called *ointment*, in *Isa.* 10. 27. And indeed all names given to Christ are very sweet and redolent : as *Shilo*, which signifies *tranquillum esse* ; intimating that Christ our peace and tranquillity, he is called *Ithiel*, *Prov.* 30. 1. A word (as *Junius* writes) compounded of three parts, as if one should say, *The strong God with me* : the name comes all one with *Immanuel*, God with us : so he that is *Ithiel*, God manifest in the flesh, is also called *Ucal*, Almighty, able to save us. He is likewise called *Jesus*, a Saviour, because he saveth his people from their sinnes. Besides these, hee hath names of office, as of King, Priest, Prophet ; he is a King for government and rule : a Priest for sacrifice and intercession ; a Prophet for teaching and revealing the secrets of the Fathers bosome.

Lastly, he hath a name futable unto his two-fold nature, *Θεοάνθρωπος*, *God-man*, the Apostle calls him, *ἁνθρωπος χριστός*, the *man Christ* ; for as man, he was in one *hypostasis*, or person with God. Now how delectable and sweet are all the names of Christ ? and how much more redolent and savoury then all the precious ointments in the world.

2. By

2. By Christs name is understood the Gospel, and the publishing thereof to the world. *Paul was a chosen vessell to carry his name unto the Gentiles, Act. 9. 15.* And it is said, *the Gentiles shall trust in his name, Matth. 12. 21.*

As ointment powred forth.

By the powring forth of Christ's name, is meant the preaching and publishing of the Gospel. Here the Church alludeth to the perfect odour of such pretious ointments, which, if it be closed up in a vessell, is not felt savory, untill it be powred forth, then the sweetnesse thereof doth spread abroad, and perfume all other things. Wee read in the Gospel of *Maries* pound of Spikenard ointment; and when shee had broken the box of pretious ointment, and powred it upon Christ's head at table, *the house was filled with the savour of it, Mark. 14. 3.*

So when the name and Gospel of Christ is preached abroad, it giveth an odour to every believing soul: so that by the preaching of the Gospel, they also receive the holy spirit. *Gal. 3. 2. They received the holy Ghost by the bearing of faith.*

רִיק

*Evacuavit,
exhaust,
Evagina-
vit.*

The word to powre forth in the Originall, signifies to exhaust, or draw dry; to empty, which may denote the plentiful powring of it forth. It also signifies to draw forth the sword to the battle, so it is used in *Ezek. 28. 7.* This may denote unto us the majesty and power of the Gospel: so Christ is bid to *gird his sword upon his thigh with glory and majesty, Ps. 45. 3.* By the sword is meant the word of the Gospel, which proceeded out of *Christs mouth, Rev. 1. 16.* And by *glory and majesty* is meant the magnificence, and powerfull effects of the word.

Therefore

Therefore doe the Virgins love thee.

The Church having laid down the cause, shewes the effect: the sweetnesse of *Messiah*, and of his graces powred forth upon her, have enflamed her heart with love towards him.

Some understand these Virgins to be such as are not espoused to Christ; such as the unconverted *Jewes*, and the uncalled of the *Gentiles*.

Others understand them to be the fellow-friends of the Spouse, and of those that are faithfull and called of God, who with pure minds serve the Lord only, and worship him in their spirits.

These Virgins are either,

1. Of particular congregations; so the Apostle calleth the Church in 2 Cor. 11. 1. *I have prepared you for one husband, and to present you as a pure Virgin unto Christ: or else,*

2. Of particular members of the Church; for the Hebrew tongue (as I hinted before) useth to call the whole the Mother, and the parts the Daughter; for so these Virgins are called in diverse places of this song.

Now the Saints and members of **Christ** are called Virgins in these respects.

1. For their chastity, as in the fore-named place, 2 Cor. 11. 2. *That I may present you as a chaste virgin unto Christ.* These love Christ with a chaste (but not with an adulterous) love.

2. For their purity: *These are they* (saith the Apostle) *which are not defiled with women, for they are virgins: these are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth: these were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God, and unto the Lamb: and in their mouth was found no guile;*

guile; for they are without fault before the throne of God, Rev. 14. 4, 5. These as virgins abstaine from all things that might be offensive to their beloved.

Love thee.

These Virgins love Christ for the odour of his good ointments, which they receive by his word and spirit; for by the preaching of the Gospel, his name is powred out like odoriferous ointment, to the exceeding great joy and delight of the Saints, drawing and inluring their minds, as Virgins are drawn with the offer of some great and lovely match: their senses are so exceedingly taken with his sweetnesse, which causeth in them a very high and worthy esteem of Christ, and of all those heavenly graces which flow from him. This Verse being thus opened, let us draw some conclusions from it.

1. Observe, in that the Church seeks out the most precious ointment to set forth her Beloved and his graces, it teacheth us: *That all the most excellent things in nature, are but types and shadows of Christ and his graces.* What is more pleasing to the smell then pretious and sweet ointments, of an exquisite composition? Christ is the same, and far sweeter to his Saints.

First, By ointment were annointed to their Offices *Kings, Priests, and Prophets*: so by the annointings of the spirit, Christ was consecrated to his three-fold office of King, Priest, and Prophet: this was prefigured by the annointing of Aaron and his sons, whereby they were consecrated unto the Priests office, *Exod. 30. 30.* It is said of Christ, *The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath annointed me to preach the Gospel, &c. Isa. 61. 1.* For God hath annointed him with the oyle of gladnesse above
his

his fellows, Psal. 45. 8. So the Prophet tells us that there should come a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots, and the Spirit of the Lord was to rest upon him, and the Spirit of wisdom and understanding; the Spirit of counsell and of might, the Spirit of knowledge, and of the feare of the Lord, Isa, 11. 12. It is said that God gave not the Spirit by measure unto him, John 3. 34. That is, he did not bestow it upon him imperfectly, and in part onely, but fully and intirely: for measure is not opposed to that which is infinite, but to that which is not whole, intire, and perfect. Christ was full of knowledge, wisdom, and of all Heavenly gifts. The Apostle saith, *That in Christ dwells all the fullnesse of the Godhead*, *consubstantial*, *bodily*, Colloff. 2. 9. That is, not by naked and bare communicating of vertue, as God is said to dwell in his Saints; but by a substantiall union of the two natures, whereby they become one, *unperson*, one person, or substance. Here is then the Vessell, which as a rich treasury is full of all Heavenly wisdom, knowledge, Divine revelations, and all sweet graces, even Jesus Christ the Anointed of God.

Secondly, By the savour and by the powring out of these Ointments is represented the powring forth of the Spirit upon all the Members of Christ: the graces of Christ which are called his sweet Ointments, they cast a sweet savour, and are powred out into all Christian hearts, and doe flow from him the head, into all the Members of his Mysticall body, as it is written, *Of his fullnesse we all receive, and grace for grace*. John 1. 16. That is, we receive suitable graces for his graces; we receive part of every communicable grace of his. This sacred Oile was powred (as upon Aaron so) upon Christ who was the head of all Saints; and from him

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that

that was the head, this Ointment of the Spirit runs downe his Mysticall body, even to the hem of his Garment. And the Apostle saith, *But yee have an unction from the holy one, and yee know all things*, 1 John 2. 20. That is, you have the Spirit of Truth which leadeth you into all Truth. And in Revel. 1. 6. *But he hath anointed us, and made us Kings and Priests to God his Father.*

This anointing of the Saints by the Spirit of Christ was prefigured, in that the Tabernacle (a figure of the Church of the new Testament) and all the Vessels of the Tabernacle (which figured out the particular members) were all anointed with the holy Oile, and consecrated unto the Lord, *Exod. 30. 23. 25.* Christ hath received the Spirit as a publique person, as a common head of all his Church, he then is the head and seat of all spirituall influence from which the mysticall body receives life and motion: this is the Apostles Simile in *Collos. 2. 19.* He makes Christ there to be the head, and the Church the body, knit together by certaine joints, and ligaments as it is in nature: and by this means doth minister supply to all parts of the body, whereby it increaseth with the increasings of God.

Thirdly, in that the holy Oile (from which the comparison was taken) was not to be powred upon any man besides the Priest onely, neither were they to make any other Oile after the composition of it, because it's consecrated Oile, *Ex. 30. 32.* It doth demonstrate unto us, that none have the anointings of Christ upon them, but the Saints onely; a stranger intermeddeth not with this joy: For saith Christ, *He* (meaning the Spirit) *shall glorifie me, for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.* Joh. 16. 14. He doth not say, the Spirit shall

ſhall declare thoſe things it received of him unto the World, but to his owne Servants: See alſo, *Joh. 14. 26, 27. I will pray the Father, and he ſhall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever: Even the Spirit of truth, whome the World cannot receive, becauſe it ſeeth him not, neither knoweth him, but yee know him, for he dwelleth in you, and ſhall be in you.* And the Apoſtle ſaith, *If any man have not the Spirit of Chriſt he is none of his.* Rom. 8. 9. By theſe Scriptures it is plaine, thit Unbelievers neither have, nor underſtand the Spirit of Chriſt. Now by what hath been ſaid, it is evident that theſe precious Ointments (here mentioned in the Text) were but types and ſhadows of Chriſt's graces. Firſt, as they were in himſelfe. Secondly, as they are conveyed in his Members. Thirdly, as they are denied to Unbelievers, being too holy to be caſt unto Dogs: all which doe ſhew, of what a redolent ſavour, and of what odoriferous ſweetneſſe all the anointings of God are in Jeſus Chriſt.

Secondly obſerve, *That though the name of Chriſt, to wit, his glorious Goſpell, be very redolent and ſavory in it ſelf, yet the Saints come to the ſenſe and feeling thereof moſt of all, by the publiſhing and diſplaying of the Goſpell.* The Virgins were moſt ſenſible of Chriſt's graces, when *his name was an Ointment powred forth.* The moſt full and perfect odours that are, and the moſt ſweet and pretious Ointments in the World, are never felt ſo ſavory, as when they be powred forth. As the *Box of pretious Ointment, when it was broken and powred on Chriſt's head, the ſavour thereof filled the houſe,* Mark. 14. 3. For by the Preaohing of the Goſpell, or the powring forth of Chriſt's name; his fame, glory, and renowne is made knowne in the World: according to that in *Luke 4. 14. There went out a fame*

a fame of him throughout all the Region round about, and he taught in their Synagogues, being glorified of all. This was that the Apostle rejoyced in, and said, Now thanks be unto God, which alwayes causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us, in every place: for we are unto God a sweet savour in Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: to the one, a Savour of death unto death; and to the other a Savour of life unto life, 2 Cor. 14, 15, 16.

Now the name of Christ is powred forth, when all his vertues and graces are displayed and laid open, when it is declared, that he hath fullfilled all righteoufnesse, and that he hath offered up himselfe by the eternall Spirit, without spot, unto God: and that he hath appeased the wrath of his Father, and made perfect reconciliation for the sins of his people; thus is Christs name as a pretious Ointment powred forth.

Againe, when Christ is set forth in his beauty to be Fairer then the Children of *Adam*, to be the chiefe of ten thousand: in his lovefree, rich, and everlasting: in his graces to be compleat and full: in his Offices to be a most excellent Prophet, Priest, and King: in his riches to be the Heire of God, and of Heaven: in all the operations of his Spirit, working Sanctification and all needfull graces in his Saints; in all those rich and costly gifts which he doth bestow on his people, redeeming of them with his pretious Blood, sanctifying of them with his pretious graces, enriching of them with his pretious promises, reviving of them with his pretious love, comforting of them with his pretious Spirit, and enabling of them with pretious Priviledges: when all these things (as I said) are opened and displayed, then is Christs name as it were, as a Box of the good Ointment broken

broken, and powred forth, then there is smelt that blessed savour, that causeth the Virgins to love him.

The Ministers of the Gospell may learn here, and see, what their duty is, and which way they should imploy their whole strength: namely, to display those treasures of grace, and to publish and spread before men those manifold transcendent excellencies, and all those wayes of shining glory which are in Christ, to draw and allure poor souls to come unto him. Who will seek after that which he knows not of? But who will not seeke after a pretious Jewell? O then! Let Christ be laid open in his natures, in his graces, in all his shining excellencies, dignities, and vertues; that so his fame being spread, and his name powred out as sweet Ointment: by this means multitudes may be drawne unto him.

Againe, the powring forth of Christ's name, by the Publishing of the Gospell, will be as effectually unto those that receive it, as Ointment is to the body unto which it is applied: So that looke, of what effects or use the most pretious confections are to the body of man; of the same effect, and of far greater use is the powring forth of Christ's name to the soule.

First, Ointments are compounded of very rich and costly things: In this respect the Ointment that Mary anointed Christ withall, was called *Pretious*, because (saith Judas) *Much might have been given for it*, Mark. 14. And of the pretious things which King Hezekiah shewed to the Ambassadors of the King of Babylon, this was one; namely, the *Good Ointment*, 2 Kings 20. 13. So is the Gospell a compound of rich and costly things; it is a treasury full of Heavenly wisdom and Divine Revelation; it is called, *Riches of glory*, Col. 1. 27. And
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the wisdom and power of God, 1 Cor. 1. The Gospell is rich in its priviledges, in its matter, in its effects, in all the promises therein contained. In a word, the divulging of the Gospell is a displaying and spreading before men all the riches of God, and of Christ: the riches of wisdom, the riches of power, the riches of love, the riches of mercy; all which are eminently shewed forth in the Gospell. This is that the Lord told *Moses*, when he said, *I will make all my goodnesse to passe before thee*, *Exod. 33. 19.* Now what doth the Lord meane by *all his goodnesse*, but onely a Proclamation of the Gospell unto *Moses*. The Lord, the Lord God, mercifull and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodnesse and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, &c. *Exod. 34. 6, 7.*

Secondly, Ointment is a signe of joy and comfort; and with such they were wont to be anointed at Feasts, *Amos 6. 6.* And they used it in signe of joy, *Eccles. 9. 7, 8.* Thus the Gospell is called *Tidings of great joy*, *Luke 1. 19.* And good *Tidings*, *Isa. 61. 1.* The Gospell of great joy, *Luke 2. 10.* because it brings a glorious joy along with it.

Thirdly, Ointment healeth wounded bodies, and knitteth up the joints which are broken, *Luke 10. 34.* So the Oile of Gods grace heals the bruises of the Soules of those that are broken in Spirit: Thus we have it in *Isa. 61. 1.* The Lord anointed me to Preach glad tidings to the meeke, and he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, &c.

Fourthly, Oile doth make the face to shine, *Psal. 104. 15.* *Eccles. 8. 1.* So the Gospell putteth a shining and glorious lustre on the faces of those to whom it comes. It is said of *Stephen*: That the Jewes looked stedfastly

fastly on him, and saw his face, as it had been the face of an Angel, Acts 6. 15. It makes mens faces shine, as did the face of Moses, when he had beene with God on the Mount.

Fifthly, By Ointment were Kings, Priests, and Prophets Anointed to their Office: So by those graces brought by the Gospell, the Saints are Anointed by Christ to be Kings, Priests, and Prophets; they are so made by *Christ unto God, and his Father*, Revel. 1. 6. The Gospell giveth men the highest Priviledges in the World, to be Kings and Priests unto God: to be a *royal Priest-hood, a holy Nation, a peculiar people*; yea, a whole Nation of Kings, Priests, and Prophets.

Thus the Gospell is as Ointment powred forth, to the unspeakable delight of the Saints, drawing and ravishing the minds of them that heare it, sweetly to embrace Jesus Christ. Thus much for the cause, the effect follows, *Therefore doe the Virgins love thee*. Whence observe,

Thirdly, *That the sweetnesse of Christ causeth love in his Saints*. The Originall of our love is Christs communicating of goodnes to us; there is nothing in the streams but what comes from the Fountaine: he is the Fountaine of love and sweetnesse, who by his streams flowing into our hearts, causeth in us to abound a Divine love towards him: the fire of his love kindles the flame of our love to him againe; our Ointment is from Christs Ointment, the head being Anointed the Oile ran downe to the Skirts, as it was said of *Aaron*. Love is the inclining of the will to something that is excellent, and agreeable to it selfe: now the nature of the will is *Elicita*, not *Coacta*, inclined and drawne forth, not compelled and constrained: The will is absolute and free;

free, no violence can be offered to it, therefore nothing but the sweetnesse and efficacy of Christs grace, can be a Load-stone attractive to draw out & incline the will.

Againe, the object of the will is something that is good: *Bonum est objectum voluntatis*, sayth the *Moralist*; whither it be *Bonum reale*, a substantiall good, or *Bonum apparens*, a seeming good, yet both are the object of the Will: Hence it is, that the transcendent excellency, beauty, love, goodnesse, and that overflowing Fountain of grace and sweetnesse, apprehended by the Saints, to be in Christ, these make him to be the best object, these also incline the Will, attract the heart, and draw the souls of Beleivers unto him.

Againe observe, that the object of the will must be a thing suitable, *Bonum sibi conveniens*, a good agreeable to it selfe. Now such a proportionable good as this, is found to be in Christ, which is respondent or answerable to all our desires or Capacities; he is suitable in all his Offices and communications, in his blood for pardon, in his grace to adorne us, in his love for lost sinners, in his fullnesse for empty and poore souls. Now when the Saints can take a spirituall view of Christ, and observe all the dimensions of his love and sweetnesse, they apprehend him to be *Summum bonum*, the chiefest good, farr beyond all worldly things, though of never so exquisite and delicate an extraction; and therefore desire most of all to have the possession of him, according to that in *Psal. 73. 25. Whom have I in Heaven but thee? and there is none upon Earth that I desire besides thee*, saith David.

Fourthly, in that the Church changeth her Speech from the whole to the parts; for shee doth not say, but the *Virgins love thee*.

Observe

Obferve,

That as the whole Church, fo every Member of Chrift hath the ſence and feeling of Chrifts love and graces, by the pouring forth of his name. John 1. 10. Of his fullneſſe wee have all received, and grace for grace. Every Member hath received a meafure and proportion from Chrifts fullneſſe. The Apoſtle ſpeaking of the Gift of Continency, ſaith, Every man hath his proper gift of God, 1 Cor. 7. 7. And ſo he ſpeaketh concerning ſpirituall gifts, and ſaith, There are diverſities of Gifts, but the ſame Spirit; and there are diverſities of operations, but it is the ſame God which worketh all in all: but the manifeſtation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withall: for to one is given by the ſame Spirit the word of wiſdome, &c. 1 Cor. 12. 4, 6, 7, 8. And ſo the whole Chapter goes on, and tells us, that the Church is the myſtical body of Chrift; and though the body be but one, yet the Members are many: and that the ſame Spirit divideth to every Member as it pleaſeth himſelfe. As in the naturall body, there is not any one member, but receives an influence from the head: So it is in the Myſticall body of Chrift. And againe the Apoſtle ſaith in Ephes. 4. 7. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the meafure of the gift of Chrift. Chrift doth meafure out proportionable gifts and graces for every Saint; therefore as the whole Church is the Spouſe of Chrift, ſo is every particular Member; and all the priviledges and graces belonging to the whole Church, belong to every Believer.

Fifthly, Obferve,

Such as are true lovers of Chrift, are onely thoſe that are holy and pure. By Virgins here are not underſtood thoſe that are ſingle or un-married; but it ſignifieth the cha-

stity and spirituall purity of those that truly love Christ. These are chaste in their lives, holy in their thoughts, sanctified in their actions. These are not defiled with the World, as to give themselves up to unclean lusts of the flesh, nor to commit spiritual whoredome against God: the Saints study to possesse their Vessells in Sanctification and honour: their bodies are the Temples of the holy Ghost, they labour to be like unto their head and Spouse; holy as he is holy, pure as he is pure: *These are they which are not defiled with women, for they are Virgins,* Revel. 14. 4. That is, that are not polluted with spirituall Fornication, as the Apostle calls it, 2 Cor. 12. 2. *These follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.* They will not follow Antichrist for their head and guide, but they follow Christ, though it be with the hazzard and losse of all their worldly enjoyments; their lover Christ is pure and chaste, like unto Virgins whose affections will not easily be drawn unto any besides their Beloved.

VERS. 4.

Draw me, we will run after thee: the King hath brought me into his Chambers: we will be glad and rejoyce in thee: we will remember thy love more then wine: the upright love thee.

IN these words we have a second request of the Spouse unto Christ, that he would not onely call her outwardly, by the voice of the Gospell; but (forasmuch as the word Preached profiteth not, if it be not mixt with faith in them that heare it, Heb. 4. 2.) that he

he would open her heart, *Acts* 16. 14. and enlighten her by his Spirit: that he would give unto her his Spirit of wisdom and revelation, that the eyes of her understanding might be opened, that shee might know what is the hope of her calling, *Ephes.* 1. 17.

In these words there are two things considerable.

1. The Prayer of the Church.

2. The Reason of it.

First, The Churches Prayer in these words, *Draw me, &c.*

Secondly, The Reasons are drawne from the effects or fruits thereof, which are two.

The first in these words, *We will run after thee.*

The second is set downe in these words, *The King hath brought me into his Chambers.*

From which effects we have the Churches protestation of ingagement, declared by a three-fold respect which shee bears to Christ.

First, shee doth exult and rejoyce in him, *We will be glad and rejoyce in thee.*

Secondly, her mind or senses are set at work, *We will remember thy love more then wine.*

Thirdly, her engagement of affection: *The upright love thee.*

First, we have the Churches Petition, the reason subjoyned with *Draw me, we will run after thee*: or take it more fully thus, *O my beloved, because I find and feel an utter inability to come unto thee, doe thou with the sweetnesse and efficacy of thy grace, powerfully incline my will and affections toward thee, and then both I and all my severall Members, shall readily and earnestly run after thee.*

שׁוּב

Draw me.

Traxit, per-
traxit, pre-
hendit, ap-
prehendit,
tenuit, re-
tenuit, con-
tinuit, pro-
hibuit, re-
traxit.

The same Originall word is used for diverse kinds of drawings.

First, to draw with violence and force; to invade or set upon, thus God promised to draw *Sisera* unto the River *Kishon*, that he might be taken, *Judges* 4. 7.

Secondly, to draw with power and strength: It is said, *A man drew a Bow at a venture*, *1 Kings* 22. 34. To draw a Bow requires strength: and in *Job* 24. 22, *He draweth the mighty by his power*. He means, that after wicked men have destroyed such are weake, they fet upon the strong.

Thirdly, to draw with love and mercy; the word signifieth sometimes to draw with words and reasons, perswading by Arguments and the like: so God is said to draw us with the *Cords of a man, and bands of love*, *Hof.* 11. 4. And the Lord declareth what signes of his love and favour he had shewed to his People *Israel*, he saith, *Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindnesse have I drawne thee*, *Jer.* 31. 3.

Fourthly, to draw noteth also the lengthning or enlarging of mercies and favours: as in *Psal.* 36. 10. *O draw thy loving-kindnesse to them that know thee*. That is, O that thou wouldest enlarge, bring home, and continue thy loving-kindnesse. Now that which the Church desires here, is, that Christ would draw her by the efficacy and power of his word and spirit, and by the sweetnesse of his grace, into a close and neer communion with himselfe.

מִשָּׁב
Interdum
significat
trahere
verbis atq;
rationibus.

Wee will run after thee.

Here we have the first reason or condition of her Perition, *We will run, &c.* Overtake it more fully thus: *O my Beloved, draw me with the power of thy Spirit, and by the sweetnesse of thy grace nearer unto thee, then I thy whole Church will follow thee.* Here shee changeth the number, but not the person, and saith in stead of, *I will, we will run, &c.* because shee would comprehend in her Speech every particular Member, as in the former Verse.

Wee will run,

The word *Run* signifies readinesse of affection, and inclination of mind; so we have in *1 Kings 19. 19. Eliphaz run after Elijah*, he run with a full intention of mind; his affections run strongly after *Elijah*: and thus the Gentiles are said to *run to Christ*, *Isa. 55. 5. Behold thou shalt call a Nation that thou knowest not, and Nations that know thee not shall run unto thee.* That is, the Gentiles that know thee not, neither had they any notice of thee before, shall with all eagernesse and readinesse of mind run unto thee.

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Significat
currere, cum
prompti & d-
ne & pro-
pensione.

Secondly, it signifies celerity and great speed, to passe through a Race, *1 Cor. 9. 24. They which run a Race run all*, saith the Apostle: and so the commanding word of God is said to *Run very swiftly*, *Psal. 147. 15. And David saith, I will run the way of thy Commandements*, *Psal. 119. 32. And he saith againe, I made hast, and delayed not to keep thy Commandements*, Verse 60.

Thirdly, it signifies perseverance and constancy, to hold out to the end. *So run* (saith the Apostle) *that yee may obtaine*, *1 Cor. 9. 24. And againe, Heb. 12. 1.*

Cur.

Run the race that is set before you: That is, so runne as to continue & hold on in your race, until you come to the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. This is that wee have in the Prophet *Isa. 40. 31.* *They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength: they shall mount up with wings as Eagles, they shall runne, and not be weary, they shall walke, and not faint.* It is in the Hebrew, *they shall change, or double their strength:* That is, they shall have a new supply of strength, to hold up their spirits, when they seeme to be feeble, and weak, and almost spent: and they shall *as Eagles*, flie strongly, and soare aloft: *and they shall walke* (that is, be enabled to persist and persevere to the end) *and not faint.*

4. To *run*, argues strength in the runner: this wee read in *Daniels* vision, of a *Ram* that had two horns (meaning the *Persian & Median Empire.*) Now this *Ram* with his two horns was pushing *West-ward, and South-ward, and North-ward*, so that no beast might stand before him. But afterwards he seeth a *bee-goat*, that came from the *West*, &c. (which is thought to be *Alexander the great*) and this *bee-goate* came to the *Ramme* that had two horns, and ranne unto him in the fury of his power, *Dan. 8. 6.* That is, by his mighty power and strength he overcame him.

5. It signifieth our whole Christian conversation, which is called a *race*, *1 Cor. 9. 24.* And saith the Apostle, *Gal. 2. 2.* *I went up by revelation, and preached the Gospel, &c. Left* (saith he) *I should run, or had run in vain.* He meaneth here by running, his earnestnesse and diligence to preach the Gospel. And again, *Gal. 5. 7.* *Ye did runne well, who did hinder you.* That is, you were in the right way, and you made a good progresse therein, you out-stript others in way of life. Our life is called a course

a course or race, which is run ; as it is said, *John fulfilled his course*, Act. 13. 25. And Paul saith, *I have finished my course*, 2 Tim. 4. 7.

6. To runne, signifies a desire to obtain the prize, as well as swiftnesse and strength : Hence the Apostle labours, that his preaching might not be in vain ; for then saith he, *I should runne in vain*, Gal. 2. 2. And again, he saith, *So runne that you may obtain*, 1 Cor. 9. 24. That is, that yee might obtain the prize, which is eternall life. So here the Church hath Christ in her eye, as a rich and glorious prize, unto whom she runs, saying, *Wee will runne after thee : And these follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth*, Revel. 14. 4. They doe reckon Christ a good prize whithersoever they run after him : they will run through thick and thin (as we use to say) *through good report and evill report*, that so they may enjoy him.

Observe first, From the Churches prayer, *Draw me*, &c.

The efficient cause of our comming unto Christ is not in ourselves, but from Christ alone, who by the efficacy of his word, and by the sweet operation of his spirit and grace, draweth us unto himselfe.

1. By nature we are utterly unable to do any thing in this respect ; for we are wholly destitute of the saving knowledge of God, and of Christ, according to the saying of David, Psal. 14. 3. *There is not a man that understandeth*, &c. And of the Apostle, 1 Cor. 2. 14. *The naturall man perceives not the things of the spirit of God, because they are spiritually discerned*. That is, they are to be taken and understood in a spirituall and heavenly sense, to which the carnall man's reason cannot reach, unlesse hee be enlightened by the holy spirit. And againe

gain in 1 Cor. 12. 3. No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the holy Ghost. That is, no man can say Jesus is the Lord, who hath bought and redeemed him, but by the instinct of the holy Ghost.

2. In conversion we are meerly passive in respect of the grace, which commeth from without a man, and preventeth him, because there is no power in man to prepare himselfe to grace, or to receive grace being offered unto him, or to will any thing that is good; for we are dead in sin: Now the dead man is only passive in respect of his quickning. Eph. 2. 5. *Even when we were dead in sinnes, hath hee quickned us together with Christ*: That is, he is dead in sin, who hath not the life of grace in him: so that by the quickning power and operation of the spirit, is begotten in the will of man a spirituall principle of grace; for the will is the most proper and prime subject of this grace, because the conversion of the will is an effectuall principle of the conversion of the whole man: but notwithstanding the understanding doth also concur, not to the conversion, but in the conversion; because mans conversion is not wrought without his consent: so that the holy Ghost worketh, and of unwillling he makes us willing, not as free Agent, but only in respect of obedience and subjection, 2 Cor. 4. 6. *Because God who hath said, that light should shine out of darkenesse, he it is who shined in our hearts*. And again the Apostle saith, Phil. 2. 13. *It is God who worketh in us both to will and to doe of his own good pleasure*. Where the will, is not understood of the substance of the will, but of a new quality. Agreeable hereunto is that of a Father: *It is certaine that wee will, when we will, but hee causeth us to will, who worketh in us to will*.

*Certum est
nos velle
cum volumus
sed ille
fecit ut velimus
qui operatur in
nobis velle,
Aug. lib.
Arbitrio,
cap. 2.*

But

But we must note also, that the will is active in conversion, and it followeth the holy spirit, who draweth it; for the holy Ghost doth so bend and incline our wills, that he causeth us to will good perfectly: so there is *Actus elicitedus*, an act of the will drawn forth, whereby it doth close with Christ, which indeed is an act of faith. But this act of the will doth not onely depend upon a principle or habit of grace ingenerated, but also upon the secret operation of the holy spirit, according to that in *John 6. 44. No man can come unto me unlesse the Father draw him.* And though this act of the will be drawn out freely, yet unavoydably and efficaciously. *John 6. 37. Whatsoever my Father giveth mee, shall come unto mee.* Now in all the actings of the will in conversion, it is but as an instrument of the holy Ghost; it is first acted by the spirit, and then it acts according to the actings of the spirit upon it.

3. The Saints are insufficient of themselves, after conversion to follow Christ. *Without me (saith Christ) yee can doe nothing,* *John 15. 5.* That is, you can do nothing that's good or acceptable. Thus the Apostle testifieth of his spirituall life: *I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me,* *Gal. 2. 20.* And again the Apostle saith, *By the grace of God I am that I am, and the grace in mee was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly then they all, yet not I.* It is not I that have taken such pains, though he did it in much travail and wearinesse, *1 PET NOT I.* Neither was it the grace of Christ that was in me, *but the grace of Christ which was with me,* *1 Cor. 15. 10.* That is, I was thus inabled for the work of the Gospel; not by any power that was in me, but it was by the flōwings in, and the actings of the Spirit of grace upon my soule.

Obserue, 2. From the effect of the Churches pray-

er, *We will run after thee.* That the Saints when drawn by Christ, have a will to follow Christ. This the Apostle testifieth of himselfe, *Rom. 7. 18.* *To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I know not.* This will appeare, if we observe the nature of the will; it is *elicita*, not *coacta*, inclined and drawn forth, not compelled and constrained: will should be no wil if it were so; for the will is absolute and free, no coactive force can be used against it, unlesse it be such as is pleasing and delightfull to it. The old saying is, *ducimus volentem*, and *trahimus nolentem*: we lead him that is willing, and draw him that is unwilling: but when Christ is said to draw us, he useth no compulsion or coercion, but it's done by the sweetnesse and efficacy of grace, and by the secret operation and working of the spirit, convincing the judgement, perswading the affections, inclining the heart, and swaying the will. There is in the bringing of the soule to Christ, *Trahere*, and *Venire*: the Father is said to draw us, *John 6. 44.* And here Christ is said to draw us: now this notes to us the efficacy of grace, and that Almighty power, by which wee are drawn unto Christ. Hence it is, that the Apostle saith, *God who commanded the light to shine out of darknesse, hath shined into our hearts*, &c. *2 Cor. 4. 6.* Now Gods word by which he commanded light to shine out of darknesse, is a very operative word: *Let there be light* (saith God) and there was light, *Gen. 1. 3.* Such an Almighty, operative, and powerfull word goes out from Christ to draw a soule to himselfe. And thus his grace works so sweetly upon our hearts, whereby wee come freely and cheerfully, and therefore we are said to come unto Christ.

Now the will being thus efficaciously and sweetly drawn

drawn to Christ; it is made to will good freely, really, and compleatly.

The office of the will is either,

1. To choose.
2. To refuse.
3. To suspend.

1. The regenerate will doth will all good, and nothing but good; for good is it's proper object, therefore it can properly choose nothing but good: therefore saith the Apostle; *If then I doe that which I would not, I consent unto the law, that it is good*, Rom. 7.16.

2. It refuses all evill, and nothing but evill: the regenerate will cannot properly choose any evil, because it is not it's proper object: it may fall into evil, but still there is a secret dislike of it, so saith the Apostle: *For that which I doe, I allow not; for what I would doe, that I doe not, but what I hate, that I doe*, Rom. 7. 15.

3. The will suspends it's actings in dubious things: when it knows not whither a thing be good or evill, it suspendeth; and when it knows not whether such a thing be truth or error, it will suspend it's either choosing or refusing of it: it will not venture in the dark, like unto the unregenerate will, but suspendeth it's actings, because *whatsoever is not of faith is sin*.

Quest. *Whether the regenerate will may not choose that which is evill, and be unwilling to that which is good.*

Ans. 1. The regenerate will cannot will any evill fully and compleatly: So saith the Apostle, *what I doe, I would not*. But there may be a kind of veility or willingnesse to evill, but not a compleat will: even as corrupt nature may have a kind of veility to that which is good: as a corrupt regenerate man may have some kind of willingnesse to do a good action, but hee never

wills the good of the action; his will to good is therefore incompleat: and so it is with the regenerate will in respect of evill; it never wills evill, as it is evill, it goes not out with full purpose and consent.

2. The holy will cannot properly refuse any thing that is good, because it is it's proper object; but the will that's good, may be so much depressed and kept under by temptation, or by desertion, and such like distempers, that it cannot draw it selfe up to the height of it's actings; so that there is not that agility, strength, and vigour, as there is, when it acts more strongly; but however it wil's good truly: and it goes forward still, though not with that vigour and eagernesse, as (if otherwise) it would.

But though the will of the regenerate be set free unto good, yet wee must so understand it, that the regenerate will cannot doe good of himselfe: Hence it is, the Church desireth, that Christ would draw her continually, without whose help shee is not able to runne after him. Where grace over-swayes the heart, there is a readinesse to obey, and constantly to follow Christ, but so as it always proceedeth from Gods spirit, leading and drawing forth of the will: even as a Mother by leading her child, causeth it to goe, which otherwise could not: so the Lord draws forth, leads and directs our affection▪ according to the actings, and good pleasure of his owne spirit: our wills are but instruments for the holy Ghost, and can doe nothing without the breathings in of his spirit upon them. This the Apostle testifies of himselfe, *I am able to do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me*, Phil. 4. 13. And again he saith, *He that hath begun his good worke in you, he will also finish it, untill the day of Jesus Christ*, Phil. 1. 6.

We

We cannot work that which is good with grace received, unlesse there be the continuall flowings in of Christ's Spirit, to carry forth the soul in it's workings. So that free grace is in the beginning, middest, and end of all our working. Herein we are made happy without any merit, that wee should be unto the praise and glory of the riches of his free grace.

3. Observe, *The life of a Christian is as the running of a race.*

1. The whole life of a Christian is here termed a running, and by the Apostle called a race, 1 Cor. 9. 24. And again saith hee, *I have finished my course*, 2 Tim. 4. 7.

2. In respect of the readinesse of the minds and affections of the Saints; they are said to *delight in the law of the Lord*, Psalm. 1. 2. The word *Chephets*, is *voluntas & prompta voluntas*, a delightfull and ready will, as one that taketh abundance of joy & delight in that which he doth; it is to embrace with love and good will, yea, with a pleasurable love, and an affectionate will and desire unto a thing: Hence the Lord promiseth to call the Church, *Chephisabab*, that is, my pleasure in her, Isa. 42. 4. And so David saith of the Saints, *Chephsibam*, that is, my pleasure in them, Psa. 16. 3. And so in Psal. 111. 2. *The workes of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.* This denotes to us the election of the will, the readinesse of the affections, and the complacency and delight of the heart of a Christian in walking with Christ: the wayes of Christ yeeld nothing but pleasure and delight to a gracious heart.

3. In respect of speedy performance of actions: Satans industrious compassing the earth, caused Job to
sind.

VEN
Volunt, op-
tavit, desi-
deravit, de-
lectatus, b-
ne effectus
fuit, placu-
it, compla-
cuit.

ΕΙΣ ΤΑΥ-
ΤΑΤΑ Θs. δι-
μαρτα α υ-
τs. Sept.

send speedily for his children to sacrifice unto the Lord, Job 1. 5. And it is said, Abraham rose up early in the morning and saddled his asse, &c. when he was to offer up his son a Sacrifice. And David saith, *I will runne the way of thy commandements*, Psal. 119. 32. And in vers. 60. *I made hast, and delayed not to keepe thy commandements*, or, *I distracted not my selfe*, to wit, with the cares, profits, pleasures of this life: Agreeable hereunto is that of Paul, when he was called by God to preach the Gospel among the Heathen, he saith, *I conferred (or I consulted) not with flesh and blood*, Gal. 1. 16. That is, I did not consult with carnall reason, or with fleshly arguments, but was obedient to the heavenly revelation or vision.

4. The Saints run in respect of perseverance; hence saith the Apostle, *So runne, that yee may obtain*, 1 Cor. 9. 24. Which implyeth, there be some that run, which do not obtain; but the Saints do renew, or change their strength, Isa. 40. 31. That is, when they are weak and feeble, they shal have a new supply of spiritual strength from Christ the fountain of strength, whereby they shall runne, or persevere to the end, and not be weary.

The Apostles hearty perswasion and confidence is, *That he who hath begun a good worke in the Philipians, will perfect it untill the day of Jesus Christ*, Phil. 1. 6. And to this purpose saith the Apostle, 1 Pet. 1. 23. *You are renewed not of mortall seed, but of immortall, by the word of God, which abideth for ever*: And 1 Joh. 3. 9. *He that is born of God sinneth not, because the seed of God remaineth in him: nor can he sinne, because he is born of God*: That is, he that hath the immortall seed of God's word and spirit within him, cannot (notwithstanding his infirmities) finally faile, or give over his hope, but shall persist and persevere in faith and holinesse.

5. The Saints run in respect of their strength, having received a new principle of life from Christ, by which they are enabled for all things: *They that wait upon the Lord, renew, change, or double their strength*, saith the Prophet. And saith David, *I will run the wayes of thy commandements, when thou shalt enlarge my heart*, Psal.

119.

6. We are said to run, in that we earnestly looke after the prize which is set before us; and therefore the Apostle saith, 1 Cor. 9. 24. *They that run a race, run all*: That is, forasmuch as all desire the prize. Now then in all our seekings and enquiriēs after Christ, in that we long after him, and desire to be joyned in the nearest communion with him, we may be said to runne after Christ. So much for the Petition, and the first reason or effect thereof: now followeth the second effect or fruit of the prayer.

The King hath brought mee into his chambers.

This second effect of the Churches petition is, the effectuall answer of Christ, *The King hath brought mee*, &c.

In Christs grant observe,

1. The title given to him, *The King*, &c.
2. The thing granted, and that is a sweet introduction into his chambers, where we have
 1. The manner; *he brought me*.
 2. The matter; *into his chambers*.

The King hath brought me into his Chambers.

The King) that is to say, Christ, of whom King Solomon was a type: Kings are such as beare rule by such power as is committed unto them. Christ is appointed King

King over his Church. *Psal. 2. 6. I have set my King upon my holy hill of Sion.* In the Originall it is, I have appointed, or powred out; &c. That is, I have ordained and authorized my King, by powring out the oile of my spirit upon him. Of this word *Nasac*, that signifieth to powr out, commeth *Nasick*, which is used for a Governour, or one in authority; as in *Micah. 5. 5.* The Lord promiseth, that when the *Assyrian* should come in the Land to raise up against him *seven Shepherds, and eight principall men*, or (as it is in the Originall) *Princes of men*: That is, such as should be eminent and chiefe in authority: So in that Christ is called a King, it denotes his transcendent dignity and honour, his rule and authority that the Father hath invested him withall, having made him King and head over his Church.

The King hath brought me, &c.

בוא

In *hiph*: significat venire fecit, adduxit, introduxit, inivit, Attulit, obtulit.

The word signifies to lead, to bring to, to apply, to induce & perswade: it is to be understood of Christs winning and perswading the hearts and affections of his people, whereby he drawes them into the most intimate and neere fellowship with himself.

Some would have this clause to be translated thus: *When the King hath brought me, &c.* Because the Church seemeth to speak of a joy and gladnesse thereupon, which she had not enjoyed before: but most certain it is, that shee had been brought into Christs chambers before, and had many tokens of his love: but this being an effect of her prayer, it may be aptly paraphrased thus: *I have prayed to my King for the sweet pledges of his love, and behold what followeth: hee like a royall and glorious Husband hath brought me into the chambers of his heavenly and spirituall treasures.*

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The King hath brought me into his Chambers.

By *Chambers* shee sheweth the dignities and priviledges which shee findeth by following Christ.

The Hebrew word *Cheder*, is used in Scripture to signifie the inmost, and most retired part of any place. *Judg. 15. 1.* Chambers are the places of the greatest secrecy: it is said, that *Elisba* told the King of Israel the words that he spake in his Bed-Chamber, *2 Kings 6. 12.* The most hidden, inward, remote, and secret things are signified by this word Translated, *Chambers*: as in *Job 9. 9. The Chambers of the South.* That is, the most remote and inward places of the South. Mans Spirit is thus expressed, because it is the most secret and inward of mans soule, *Prov. 24. 4. By knowledge shall the Chambers be filled*; that is, the most secret parts of the soul shall be filled by knowledge, *Prov. 18. 8. The inward part of the Belly, Prov. 7. 27. They goe downe to the Chambers of death.* That is, into the secret wayes of death, towit the Grave. *Luke 12. 3. That which you have spoken in your Closets.* That which you spoke in secret, and thought none should heare, *Mat. 6. 6. Enter into thy Closet, and thy Father which seeth thee in secret, &c.* So here, by Chambers is meant the most inward, secret, and close revelation of Christ to the soule.

Againe, Chambers are the places of most safety, *Dent. 32. 25. It is said, The Sword without, and terror within, (or from the Chambers) shall destroy, &c.* That is, destruction shall follow them into the places of the greatest safety. And in *Ezek. 21. 14. The great men are slaine which enter into their privy Chambers.* That is, they shall

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not

not escape, no not in their Chambers of safety. So that here by Chambers is hinted out to us, Christs protecting and preserving of his Saints.

Observe hence, first, from the title given to Christ, *The King, &c.*

That Christ is King and head over his Church. Christ was the naturall Son of God, and thought it not robbery to be equall with God, Phil. 2. 6. For by him the World was made, who was the brightnesse of his glory, and the expresse Image of his person, and upholdeth all things by the word of his power, Heb. 1. 2, 3. Therefore this prerogative will very well besit the Son of God.

God hath designed and appointed Christ to this great Office and dignity, *He loveth him and hath given all things into his hand, John 3. 35. He judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgement to his Son, John 5. 22. He hath made him to be Lord and Christ, Acts 2. 36. He hath appointed him over his owne house, Heb. 3. 2. 6. And saith God, I have set my King upon my holy hill of Sion, or the Hill of my Holinesse, and that by vertue of a solemn decree; I will declare the decree, &c. Psal. 2. 6, 7. And the Government shall be upon his Shoulders, Isa. 9. 7.*

Now Christ is a King, whose glory and dignity shines forth most eminently, for saith God, *I will make my first-borne higher then the Kings of the Earth, Psal. 89. 27. Christ is a King above all other Kings; and that in these respects.*

First, his Kingdome is spirituall, he rules over the souls and Consciences of men: other Kings may subject the bodies and estates of such as are under them, but not their Consciences; this is Christs glory which he will not give to another. *Ye are bought with a price (saith the Apostle) be not ye servants of men, 1 Cor. 7. 23. That*

is,

is, doe not mancipate and inslave your Consciences to any humane devise in matters meerly spiritual; because Christ alone is King of the Conscience.

Secondly, Christ is an universall King.

First, in respect of all Nations; *There was given him Dominion, and glory, and a Kingdome, that all people and Nations, and Languages should serve him, Dan. 7. 14. The Heathen are his Inheritance, and the ends of the Earth his possession. Psal. 2. 8. And the Apostle speaking of the Preachers of the Gospell, saith, Their sound went into all the Earth, and their words to the end of the World, Rom. 10. 18.*

Secondly, in respect of all sorts and conditions of men; this is elegantly set forth by the Prophet, *Isa. 41. 19. Where God promiseth To plant in the Wildernesse the Cedar, the Shittath Tree, the Myrtle; the Oile-Tree, the Fir-Tree, the Pine, and the Box-Tree together. This is also sweetly represented unto Peter by a Sheet knit at fowre corners, wherein were all manner of fowr-footed beasts of the Earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and Fowles of the Aire, Acts 10. 12. By this we are taught, that not onely the Gentiles as well as the Jewes were to be received into Christ's Kingdome; but also that in every Nation (as himselfe afterwards Expounds it) he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him, Verf. 35.*

Thirdly, Christ is King universall, in respect of all ages and times of the World. *God is my King of old, saith the Church, Psal. 74. 12. It is meant of Christ because it is said of him in the following words, Hee worketh Salvation in the midst of the Earth. It is Christ that worketh Salvation in the midst of the Earth; and he is called a King eternall, immortall, 1 Tim. 1. 17.*

Thirdly, Christ rules alone; he hath no colleague or partner; he carries the Government upon his owne Shoulders, as we read, *Isa. 9. 6.* He alone hath received power from on high in Governing of his Church.

Fourthly, Christ is an everlasting King; *Hereceives a Kingdome that cannot be shaken: The God of Heaven (saith the Prophet) shall set up a Kingdome which shall never be destroyed; neither shall it be left to other people, but it shall stand for ever, Dan. 2. 44.*

Fifthly, and lastly, Christ is matchlesse and eminent above all other Kings in all royall vertues and endowments.

First, he is wise and sapient, and therefore called *Connsellour, onely wise, the wonderfull numberer*, which sealeth up the sum full of wisdom.

Secondly, a most magnificent and warlike King; hence Christ is called, *A man of War, the Lord of Hosts, the Captaine of our Salvation*: he overcomes all his Enemies, and his foes are made his foot-stoole.

Thirdly, Christ is a most just and righteous King; he reigns in righteousness; his Scepter is a Scepter of rectitude and uprightnesse, *He is called the Lord our righteousness, Jer. 23. 6.*

Secondly Observe, *That Christ sweetly draws and persuades his people to a neer communion with himselfe. The King hath brought me, &c.* Christ doth win the hearts of his people by love and goodnesse. This is manifested Chap. 2. Vers. 4. where it is said, *He brought me into the Banqueting House, and his banner over me was love.* A flag, or ensigne is a warlike signe, whereby Souldiers are drawne from place to place: So here, Christ sets up a Banner of love and goodnesse, whereby he draws his people after him; when he displays his Banner, then

all the Armies in Heaven and Earth follow him. It was by love we were redeemed; for *Christ loved his Church* (saith the Apostle) *and gave himselfe for it,* Ephes. 5. 25. By love we are sanctified and cleansed, as we have it in *Revel. 1. 5.* *Christ hath loved us and hath washed us in his blood.* He hath washed us, both from the guilt and pollution of sin, and all from love. It is also by the same love wherewithall Christ doth win and draw his people after him.

Thirdly Observe, *Christ revealeth to his Saints, the secret and hidden Mysteries of the Gospell.* Christ leads his people into his privy Chambers, and displayeth the secrets of God to them that feare him, *Psal. 25. 14.*

Consider, first, Chambers are the places in which the Bridegroom and the Bride use to rejoyce together, *Joel 2. 16.* So Christ as the Bridegroom rejoyceth over the Bride, and doth communicate spirituall comforts unto her, *Such as eye hath not scene, nor eare heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, the things that God hath prepared for them that love him: but God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God, and thus we have the mind of Christ,* 1 Cor. 2. 9, 10, 16. This is that the Apostle doth earnestly desire, that the Church of the *Collossians* might have their hearts comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the fulnesse of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the *Mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ: in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,* Collos. 2. 2, 3. When Christ revealeth such Mysteries unto his Saints, he may be said then to lead them into his Chambers.

Secondly, touching these Chambers or inner rooms, they import a sight of rich Treasures, or pretious Jew-
ells

ells : Kings have the greatest treasures upon Earth; and they keep their richest Ornaments and pretious things in their Chambers. Now Christ is the richest of all Kings, and he like a Kingly Bridegroom leadeth his Spouse into his Chambers, and sheweth her all his riches and glory which he hath laid up for her in the Heavens. Christ is rich in love, rich in mercy, rich in grace, rich in wisdom, and rich in knowledge : yea, as rich as God himselfe : now Christ spreadeth these his riches before his Saints, that they may see how rich they be in him.

But we must know Christ leads his people into his Chambers by degrees; he led his Church into his Chambers in the time of the Law, and shewed her the riches and glory of his Kingdome: but this he hath done more fully under the Gospell, since his manifestation in the flesh, since the rising of the sun of righteousness, and the shining of that morning Starre: and most fully it shall be done at the consummation of the Marriage of Christ and his Spouse. Here the Spouse hath some glimmerings of these riches, but then shee shall have them in perfect sight: here shee enjoysthem by vertue of a promise, but then shee shall have the full fruition of them.

Lastly Observe, *The Saints are most safe and secure in Jesus Christ.* Chambers are places of great security, therefore the Lord saith, *Come my people, enter into thy Chambers, and shut thy doors about thee, hide thy selfe for a very little moment, untill the indignation be over past,* Isa. 26. 20. And thus Christ comforteth his Disciples against the Persecution of men, *These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace; in the World yee shall have Tribulation; but be of good cheer I have overcome the*
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the World, John 16. 33. Thus David susteineth his faith by the power and protection of God, *For in the time of trouble (saith he) he shall hide me in his pavilion, in the secret of his Tabernacle shall he hide me, he shall set me up upon a Rock,* Psal. 27. 5. That is, he shall keep me safe as in the most holy of his Sanctuary, into which none might enter but the Priest, *Levit. 16. 2.* And therefore it is called Gods *hidden place,* Ezek. 7. 22. And the Saints are called *hidden ones,* Psal. 83. 4. because they are hidden of God, in his Tabernacle in the evill day. And their life is *hid with Christ in God,* Collos. 3. 3. Christ therefore is a Chamber of safety and preservation to his people in evill times.

So much for the fruits or effects ensuing the most fervent Prayer of the Church. Now followeth her protestation of ingagement in these words.

We will be glad and rejoyce in thee: we will remember thy love more then Wine: the Upright love thee.

In these words the Church declareth how much her affections are ingaged to Christ for all his love manifested unto her: her affections of joy and delight, and of love, are fixed upon him: and also her mind or Senses, one Sense, namely the *Memory,* is put for all the rest, to record his love, and that before Wine, which is one of the most delightfull creatures to the nature of man, under the Sunne: as if shee should say, looke how the affections and minds of worldly men are ready to rejoyce in, and to remember Wine or any Worldly delight: Even so, and much more will we rejoyce in thee, with spirituall mirth and gladnesse, and we will celebrate and magnifie, yea we will record and make mention of thy loves.

loves above all the pleasures and delights which are to be found upon Earth.

We will be glad and rejoyce.

הלל
Exultavit,
gestis ga-
dia & leti-
tiam animi
letitiam ge-
stus corporis
expressit,
exultavit
gaudio, le-
tatur fuit.
Αγαλλασα-
μαι, exulto,
gestio, tri-
pudio.

The word (*Glad*) in the Originall, signifieth to exult and rejoyce exceedingly, and to leap for joy, and to triumph with outward gladnesse, expressed by the gesture of the body, and by the countenance: answerable hereunto is the Greeke *ἀγαλλίζω*, which also signifies exceeding great joy, such as is expressed by outward signes of the body, as by an outward leaping of heart and mind. It is rendered by our Translation, *Judges 24. Exceeding joy*. The same word is also used, by which *Mary joyd* for being the Mother of Christ, *Luke 1. 47*.

And rejoyce.

שמח
Letatus, hi-
laris fuit,
metaphorice
claruit, lux-
it.

The word signifieth joy and pleasantnesse: also metaphorically to shine, because joy and prosperity is often signified by the name of light: as in *Esther 8. 16. The Jewes had light and gladnesse*. And so in *Psal. 97. 11. Light is sown for the righteous*. That is, comfort and joy is reserved for the righteous, after all their troubles. *Light is sweet and pleasant, Eccles. 11. 7*. So this rejoycing is such a joy whereby the mind is refreshed and the heart comforted. So the sum of the words (*We will be glad and rejoyce*) is this, we will be comforted and refreshed inwardly, and we will exult and triumph outwardly: these are the comforts shee findeth in the Kings Chambers, wherein Christ revealeth to her the secrets of his Fathers bosome, and the Mysteries of his Kingdome; and where he sheweth her those Heavenly treasures and rich Ornaments and glory, which he reserveth for her, and assureth her of; from whence ariseth

ariseeth all her spirituall joy and gladnesse.

We will remember thy love more then wine.

The word (*Remember*) signifieth to record, rehearse, and to make mention of a thing, to recast into the mind, to celebrate the memoriall of any thing. So the Church ingageth to remember and to beare in mind, and to tell abroad, and to rehearse all the sweet pledges, and manifestations of Christs love unto her. Now the Memory is the Store-house of the soule wherein we lay up things for our use, and bring them forth as we have occasion to use them; it is as Christ saith of the Kingdome of Heaven, *Like a Treasury, out of which a man bringeth forth things new and old*, Mat. 13. 52. Our memory is that in which we record and set downe the things that we would remember: it is as a Booke of Accounts; as we use a Booke outwardly, so the memory is that we use inwardly. David saith in Psal. 119. 11. *I have hid thy word within my heart*: that is, that I might not forget it: it is a metaphor taken from pretious Jewells and treasures, which men lay up and hide safe from danger: So in Mat. 13. 44. *The Kingdome of Heaven is like to treasure hid in the Field, which when a man findeth it he hideth*. That is, he concealeth it and makes it sure to himselfe, lest any should beguile him of it.

Thy loves more then wine.

That is, those manifold and various manifestations of thy loves, which are better, and shall be more remembered by us, then the most fragrant wine: one pleasant species or kind for all other pleasant things in the world. Yea, we will remember thy loves, every particullar love, not one of them shall be forgotten, of all those severall

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loves.

זכר
Recordatus
fuit, memi-
nit, memon
fuit, in his
recordari
fecit, mem-
oriam consti-
tuit, in me-
morian ce-
lebravit.
Significat
id quod in
code refer-
unt.

לדברך

loves wherewithall thou hast loved us. I passe this, because we had the like in the first Verse.

The Upright love thee.

מישרים It is in the Hebrew, *uprightnesses, or righteousnesses love thee*: whereby the abstract is put for the concrete: for it is meant *righteous* or *upright* persons, who have upright conversations and upright hearts: So in Jer. 50. 31. *Behold I am against thee O thou most proud: that is, O thou most proud person*: So in Prov. 13. 6. *Wickedness overthroweth sin, that is, it overthroweth the sinner*. And againe, Nehem. 12. 31. *And I appointed two great Thanksgivings; that is, I appointed two great companies of Thanksgivers*. So here, *Uprightnesses love thee*: that is, holy and upright men, such as have washed their Garments in the Blood of the Lamb, such as were the Virgins before mentioned, doe with pure and upright affections love Christ.

But here we must take notice, that the uprightnesse which the Scripture attributeth to the Saints, is not to be understood of a legall uprightnesse or perfection; for that they cannot possible attaine unto: but it is to be understood,

First, of the sincerity of the mind, and uprightnesse of the heart: it is a single, perfect, and upright heart, as Gen. 17. 1. *Walk before me and be upright*: that is, be thou sincere or upright: the same word that is here translated *upright*, is in many places of Scripture Translated *perfect*, as Job 1. 1. Now the Saints are perfect in Christ their head, and they are perfect in respect of their justification, *For by one offering Christ hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified*, Heb. 10. 14. And they are perfect in parts, in respect of sanctification, being sanctified in every

חכם
Integer, perfectus
corymbo vel animo, absolute, completus.

very

very part; they are sanctified *throughout, in soule and body, and spirit*, 1 Theff. 5. 23.

Or thus, the Saints are perfect and upright comparatively, being compared to others that are weak or lesse perfect.

Lastly, uprightnesse may be opposed unto hypocrisie, or to one that will pretend much, and intend little; one that hath a double heart, a heart and a heart: So it notes to us one of an upright heart, & of a sincere mind, one that is single and plaue hearted, and of a simple disposition, without guile or wickednesse. The Greeks expresse this by such words as signifieth one that is without complaint, none can justly complaine of him: and one that is blamelesse, or without blemish. The word (*Tamin*) be thou perfect, upright, or sound, or honest and plaue in thy walking, *Gen. 17. 1.* comes from the same roote that the word *Thummim* doth, which we read of, *Exod. 28. 30.* the High-Priest was to beare *Urim* and *Thummim* on his Breast-plate; and *Thummim* was to signifie the uprightnes and integrity of his heart and life, as the *Urim* did the light of his understanding and knowledge. Uprightnesse being opposed to that which is crooked, is that which is streight and right: it being opposed to that which is lame and defective, it is perfect, sound, and firme: it being opposed to hypocrisie, it is sincere, pure, and holy.

Αμεττος,
& Αμανος
Integritas
pōlis, in-
culpatus.

תם
Vale.
תמים

The upright love thee.

That is, the righteous are confirmed and increased in love towards him, more and more: thus the Apostle writeth to the Saints, *That they might believe on the Son of God*, 1 John 5. 13. That is, that they might continue and persevere, and that they might increase and grow

strong in faith. So the sence is this, whereas Christ lea-
deth his Saints into his Chambers, and there discovers
to them the secrets of the Fathers bosome, and giveth
them glorious sights of those Heavenly riches and trea-
sures which he hath prepared for them; now by their
remembring and mentioning of Christs love, they are
confirmed and increased in love towards him againe.
The words being thus unfolded yeild us these Observa-
tions.

First, *That those glorious discoveries of Christ made (towit,
in his Chambers) to the Saints, causeth in them glorious
and unspeakable joy.* It makes them to rejoyce inwardly,
and to triumph outwardly; yea, they leap for joy:
their joy is like the joy in Harvest, and like to those that
divide the spoile, *Isa. 9. 3.* As *John Baptist* leapt in his
Mothers Womb at the tidings of Christ: So the Saints
cannot but rejoyce in the spirituall revelation of Christ;
whose Kingdome is not meat and drink, but righteoul-
nesse and joy in the holy Ghost, *Rom. 14. 17.* Wherefore
the Prophet saith, *I will greatly rejoyce in the Lord, my soule
shall be joyfull in my God; for he hath clothed me with the
Garments of Salvation, he hath covered me with the Robe of
righteousnesse; as a Bridegroom decketh himselfe with Orna-
ments, and as a Bride adorneth her selfe with Jewells, Isa. 61.
10.* It is in the Hebrew, *In rejoycing I will rejoyce;* that is,
with exceeding great joy: this joy is called *unspeakable
and full of glory*, *1 Pet. 1. 8.* forasmuch as the thing it selfe
wherein we rejoyce, and the workings of Christs Spirit,
causing this joy, is more Heavenly and divine, then we
can either conceive or expresse. And this is that which
the Apostle exhorteth us unto, *Phil. 4. 4. Rejoyce in the
Lord.* And he saith further, take it upon good grounds,
forasmuch as you have the true cause of joy. *And againe*

Ifay rejoyce. Take a Virgin which is betrothed to some great Prince, and lead her into his Chambers, and shew unto her all his rich Treasures, and Jewells which are reserved for her: will it not make her greatly to rejoyce? Thus the soul is led into the Heavenly Chambers of Christ, and there is shewed unto her the glory and riches given her by Christ, how is it possible but she should rejoyce and be glad? and rejoyce with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Secondly Observe, *The Saints record and make mention of all Christs manifestations of love to their souls.* Come and heare (saied David) ye that feare the Lord, and I will declare what he hath done for my soule. As if he had said, I shall tell you of many strange passages of love, which the Lord hath shewed towards me. And this is that the Prophet calls for, saying, *Praise the Lord, call upon his name, declare his doings among the People, make mention that his name is exalted,* Isa. 12. 3, 4. And againe, *I will mention the loving-kindnesse of the Lord, the praises of the Lord, according to all that he hath bestowed upon us, and the great goodnesse towards the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercye, and according to his loving-kindnesse,* Isa. 63. And so in Psal. 45. 18. *I will make thy name to be remembred in all Generations, therefore shall the people praise (or confesse) thee for ever and for ever.* That is, I shall for ever confesse and celebrate the glory of thy Kingdome.

Now the Memory is the Store-house of the soule; if it were not for this faculty, all the favours we receive from Christ would be lost and forgotten, it would be as the Prophet speaketh of him that earneth wages, to put it in a bag with holes, Hag. 1. 6. And forgetfullnesse is complained of very much in Jer. 2. 32. *Can a Maid forget*

forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? yet my people have forgotten me dayes without number; as if the Lord had said, I am much better unto you then your garments, or attire; and if it be such a hard thing to forget such things as they, how is it that you have forgotten me. All the service that is expected of us, is comprehended under the Memory, *Eccl. 12. 1. Remember thy Creator in the dayes of thy youth, &c.* Remember is put for fear, honour, obedience, & the like: Christs love cannot be forgotten in a gracious heart, but it maketh us never to be satisfied with the setting forth, & publishing to others the sweet refreshing comforts we find in his love, yea, of his loves, that is, of all his particular loves, even from election unto glorification: a beleiver wil celebrate & set forth every new act of grace w^{ch} he receives from Christ, he will not commit any of them unto oblivion or forgetfulness.

3. Observe, *That all a Beleivers faculties, senses & affections are dedicated & given up to Jesus Christ.* The memory, the will, the affections of joy and delight, & of love, are all fixed upon that love-deserving object, *Christ*: if it were not so, what do we differ from Beasts? and a beast in the shape of a man is the worst of all. Our affections are very pleasant & delightful to us, & this object is as pleasant as our affections: there is no object in the world but there is a wil inclinable to close with it: now what better object can our wil & affections have, then *Christ*.

4. Observe, *The affections of the Saints are more ingaged to Christ, & consecrated to his love, then unto the greatest delights in the World. More then wine.* Wine is put (by a *synecdoche*) for all pleasant and delightful things in the World: yet saith the Church, *we will remember thy loves more then worldly minded men do remember Wine*: yea, more then we our selves doe remember our worldly enjoyments. A Saint may love the Creature according

to that Character God hath stamped upon it ; but still he setteth Christ on the top of his affections : witnesse David in Psa. 73. 25. *Whom have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none in Earth that I desire besides thee.* When we let our affections run out upon the Creature, we doe but lose them and they become unprofitable unto us ; but when they are set upon Christ we lose them not, he makes them Heavenly and gracious, and gives them to us againe : whatsoever we expend on Christ, in Christ we shall find it again.

The upright love thee.

Hence Observe, *That the Saints are perfect and upright in a Gospell account :* A man is that in Gospell account which he sincerely desires to be : a beleiver aims at perfection, and therefore he is called a perfect man, his desires carry the denomination of the thing desired. Now that part in man that hath the predominancy, and is most active, that part carrieth the denomination of the whole: now uprightness, and righteousness, holiness, and sincerity, these carry the greatest sway in the hearts of the Saints; they being sanctified in every part, in soule and body, and Spirit: hence they are called holy, righteous, pure, undefiled and clean, having their Conscience clean by the blood of sprinkling, and the like.

Secondly Observe, *That holy and righteous men are only fit to praise and make mention of the love of Christ.* All the righteousness of the will, of the mind, of the affections, will praise and celebrate Christs love : but as for unrighteousnes it is enmity against Christ, and unfit to mention or to praise his love. And therefore the exhortation is to the righteous, Ps. 33. 1. *Rejoice in the Lord O ye righteous, for praise is comely for the upright.* The word translated *comely*, denoteth a fair and comely grace, for which a thing is to be liked or desired.

The

The Apostle expresseth it in *Greek* by fair and beautifull. *Rom. 10. 15. How beautifull are the feet of those that preach the Gospel, &c.* That is, how desireable are the feet of those that preach the Gospel; For the beauty of a thing makes it to be desired: now the praises of Christs love are most desireable and glorious in the Saints, none but they are fit to record and make mention of Christs loves.

Lastly, Observe,

The Saints by remembring and making mention of Christs loves, are the more confirmed and increased in love towards him.

The Church had declared before, that those chaste and pure virgins loved Christ; but here she doth mention it again, to declare, that now the Spouse had been in the Bed-chamber of the King, and had a sight of those heavenly treasures which are reserved for her: whereupon shee rejoyceth with exceeding great joy, and doth also record and rehearse all his loves: and by this means all the upright are enflamed more & more with love to Christ. As fire is encreased by adding of fuell unto it; so is our love to Christ, upon fresh and new manifestations of his great love toward us.

VERS.

VERS. 5, 6.

I am blacke, but comely, O yee daughters of Jerusalem: as the Tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon.

Looke not upon me, because I am blacke, because the Sunne hath looked upon me: my mothers children were angry with me, they made me the keeper of the vineyards, but mine owne vineyard have I not kept.

IN the precedent verses we had the Churches first speech unto Christ, professing her faith and love: now we have an Apostrophe, or her aversion or turning of speech from her Beloved, unto the Daughters of Jerusalem, to prevent those scandals and offences, which might arise in respect of the Churches afflictions and infirmities which she was subject unto in this life. It falleth out sometimes, that some do love them, that do not love them again: and so the objection might be thus; Thou art enamored with a vehement and passionate love; but is it not towards one that careth not for thee? and one that doth farre excell thee? For thou hast set him forth to be a glorious and great King, so gracious and loving, so sweet and pleasant, so faire and beautifull, so rich and compleat, as that nothing under heaven is any way comparable unto him. Now how is it possible that thou shouldst be a Spouse to such a glorious Bridegroom? how should he love or delight in thee, thou art but a black hued Virgin, & therefore canst not be fit to match to such a beautiful sweet King as is *Messiah*. Now she answereth all this fully, and that first by a double adjunct of colour, or hue, one contrary to the other.

1. By confession, *I am black;*

M

2. By

2. By refutation, *but comely.*

Both which are illustrated by two comparisons.

1. To shew her blacknesse; *As the tents of Kedar.*

2. To shew her fairnesse; *As the curtains, or the hangings of Solomon,* vers. 5.

Now she proceedeth unto a more full answer, because none should take offence at her blacknesse, as to impair her dignity or worth, or more lightly to regard or esteem of her: and this she doth

1. By admonition to the daughters of Jerusalem, not to despise or disdain her, in these words, *Looke not upon me because I am black.*

2. Shee rendereth a reason of her admonition, and that is drawn from the cause of her blacknesse, and the cause is three-fold.

1. From the supream cause; *The sunne hath looked upon me.*

2. From the instrumentall cause, *my mothers children were angry with me, &c.*

3. From the impulsive cause, which was internal & wholly in her selfe; that is, though they made her the keeper of the Vinyards, yet she kept not well her own Vineyard.

I am blacke, but comely.

שחר
Benigrari,
Nigrescere,
nigrum esse.
In pib. dilu-
culo, manè,
seculò, stu-
diose quare-
re: a nomine

The Hebrew word here translated *blacke*, signifieth *blacknesse, or darknesse*: and therefore the Hebrew word *Atisl. char*, is taken from the same roote, which signifies the *morning*, or the *day-dawning*, because of the *blacknesse* thereof.

1. By *blacknesse* or *darknesse* we may understand affliction or tribulation: so the Prophet calleth tribulation night, because the solitarinesse and fear thereof, is like the

the darknesse. *Iſa.* 26. 9. *With my ſoule have I deſired thee in the night: Tee my ſpirit within me, will I ſeeke thee early.* And *Job* complameth; *My ſkinne* (ſaith hee) *is blacke upon me, and my bones are burnt with heat,* *Job* 30. 30. And thus *Jeremie* lamenteth the blackneſſe of the *Nazarites* viſage, ſaying, *their viſage is blacker then a coale,* *Lam.* 4. 8. The words in the Originall run thus, *their viſage is darker then blackneſſe: that is, it is darke and ſad with grieve and famine.*

Again, in *Jerem.* 14. 2. *Judah mourneth, and the gates thereof languish, they are blacke unto the ground: that is, they are made to bow downe to the ground, as David ſaith,* *Pſal.* 38. 6. *I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly: or elſe for faintneſſe they ſinke and fall down to the ground, as the Pſalmiſt ſpeaketh in* *Pſal.* 39. 44. *Thou haſt caſt his Throne downe to the ground: that is, I will afflict him, and lay his glory in the duſt: thus darkneſſe and blackneſſe may be taken for affliction.*

2. Blackneſſe may alſo imply ſinne, and that in reſpect of her negligence, which ſhee confeſſeth, in that ſhe did not keep well her own Vineyard. The Apoſtle calleth ſinne darkneſſe, *Col.* 1. 13. *Who hath delivered you from the power of darkneſſe: that is, from the power and dominion of ſin.* And again, in *1 Theſ.* 5. 5. The Apoſtle ſpeaking to Believers, ſaith, *Tee are the children of the light, and the children of the day: wee are not of the night, or of darkneſſe: hee meaneth the night and darkneſſe of ſin.* Now darkneſſe is called ſin in theſe foure reſpects.

1. Becauſe ſin proceedeth from darkneſſe, that is, from the ignorance of the unregenerate understanding and will: As the Apoſtle ſpeaking of the Gentiles that did not glorifie God, as God, ſaith, *They became vaine in*

סחר
Amora ſic u
nigrore di
ſta qui eam
imitatur,
Buxtorf. in
lex. Inde.
שחרור
Jer. 2. 18.
Nilus ob a-
quarum ni-
gredinem
ſic diſturbu-
ti etiam a
Græcis με-
λας.

Schind. in
lex. pentag.
101.

their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened, Rom. 1. 21. And in Ephes. 4. 18. Having their understanding darkened, or (as it is in the Original) being darkened in the understanding, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.

2. Sin darkneth the very light of nature, and men by sinne seek to increase their darknesse: this is the meaning of the Apostle in the place before mentioned, Rom. 1. 21. Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God; neither were thankfull, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened: that is, it became darker then it was by nature; for the Apostle telleth us in vers. 20. That the light of nature would reach thus far, as to know the invisible things of God, by those that were visible, that is, by the creatures; but saith the Apostle in v. 22. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fooler: that is, they were grown more sottish then they were before.

3. They that commit sinne, love to act in darknesse; they that doe the works of darknesse, love to work in darknesse. John 3. 19, 20. Light is come into the world, and men love darknesse rather then light, because their deeds are evil: that is, they love darknesse, because their deeds are deeds of darknesse: For he that doth evil, hateth (and shunneth) the light: neither cometh to the light lest his deeds should be reproved, or discovered, and made manifest.

4. Because darknes of sin brings (unless it be pardoned in Christ) darknesse of misery: Everlasting punishment is called everlasting darknesse, Lu. 8. 12. & 22. 13. Darknesse leads to darknesse; that pure darknesse upon the understanding, leads to everlasting darknesse of misery.

mifery. Now in all thefe refpects finne may be called darkneffe and blackneffe : and feeing this is the nature of fin, the Church in refpect of the remainders of finne may fay, *I am blacke.*

3. By blackneffe we may underftand her forrow and mourning for her prefent miferies; for black colour was the habit of mourners; *For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt : aftonifhment hath taken hold on me,* Jer. 8. 21. That is, I go in black, as mourners ufe to do; or elfe, I mourn and am in heavineffe. Now wee may take either of thefe interpretations, concerning the Churches blackneffe; for ſhe was under the ſcorching fun of perfecution, and under the darkneffe of fin by her negligence; and under blackneffe of forrow and mourning, becaufe of the two former, to wit, trouble and fin: fo the ſumme of all is this much, *I am blacke*: If you look upon me with carnall eyes, my fairneffe doth not appear to the eye of ſenſe and reaſon: I have no externall beauty, and therefore if you look upon me, as the world looks upon me, I ſhall ſeeme to be black, and without any comelineffe at all. Now to prevent this objection, ſhe addeth:

But comely.

Here by way of refutation; though I am black; yet I am alſo comely: elfe it might have been reaſoned againſt her thus: Thou art black, and therefore not to be beloved, neither art thou a fit Spouſe for this glorious King, that thou ſo magnifieſt; for it is moſt fit, that ſuch a worthy Prince ſhould have a glorious and a beautifull Wife. Shee answereth, ſaying, notwithstanding blackneffe, yet I am lovely, and to be deſired.

The Hebrew *Natub*, ſignifieth *deſireable, comely, amiable,*

אור
Desidera-
vit.
In Niph.
נאור
Desiderabi-
lis, & per
metalepsin,
pulcher, de-
corus, con-
veniens su-
it, decuit.

ble, beautifull : It is used to expresse that desire, by which we long earnestly after a thing, even with a greedy appetite : according to this the Prophet useth it, when he saith, *My soule desireth the first ripe fruit*, Mic. 7. 1. The Greeks turn it, by ἐπιθυμῶ, to desire ; and by ἐθέλω, to wil, Job 23. 13. And also they translate it *goodly, faire*, and *beautifull*, Rom. 10. 15. *How beautifull are the feet, &c.* That is, *how amiable, and how desireable are the feet of those that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring tidings of great joy.*

Now comeliness consisteth in two things.

First, in fairnesse of Complexion : thus Christ is said to be beautifull by his countenance and complexion. *Cant. 5. 10. My beloved is white and ruddy.* White and red shew the best temperature in man, & the mixture of these two colours makes a beautifull and good complexion. Herein the Church is also beautifull, and commended for the comeliness of her countenance, *Song 2. 14. And thy countenance is comely*, saith Christ.

2. In a just symmetry or proportion of parts : and thus Christ is set forth to be comely, by that pleasant harmony and specious consent of parts, which is found to be in him. *Song 5. 10, &c.* where the Church doth summe and reckon up all his parts, from top to toe, (as we use to say) from his head to his feete ; and at last concludes thus, *he is altogether lovely.* But this is not meant of the outward lineaments and proportion of his body, but of his spirituall beauty and grace. Now the Church must needs be also beautifull, in respect of inward and spirituall beauty ; forasmuch as shee is the *workmanship of God created in Christ Jesus unto good works*, Ephes. 2. 10. So that as we were Gods workmanship in our first creation, so likewise in our regeneration or second

second creation. This workmanship of God is that whereby he doth renew us by his spirit, and change our wills to holiness and righteousness, wherein consisteth his own glorious image: So that now all parts of man are renewed, and sanctified; they have all received a proportion of grace, and they all sweetly con-
 curre with one harmonious consent to act for Christ, even as they are acted by his Spirit.

Now it appeareth that the Churches comeliness is not any naturall beauty; but it's supernaturall, it is a derivative beauty. Thus we have it in Ezek. 16. 12, 13, 14. Where the Lord saith; *I cloathed thee with broidered worke, vers. 10. And I decked thee with ornaments, &c. vers. 11. And I put upon thee jewels of silver and gold, vers. 12. And saith God, Thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty; for it was perfect through my comeliness which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord, vers. 14.* The Lord gave of his own beauty and excellency, and thereby *Jerusalem* became beautifull and glorious: So all the Saints shine in the glory and excellency of Jesus Christ. Hence we are said, *to put on the new man*, Colos. 3. 10. The Apostle useth a metaphor, taken from the putting on of garments, to shew, that those graces which wee receive from Christ, are so many additions to our nature; and that we are wholly destitute and naked by nature, having no form nor comeliness upon us: but those renewed graces, which are after the image of God; they are as beautifull ornaments to our soules. Now in this respect the Church is comely, yea, and shee is much more comely then shee is blacke; shee is not so black in her selfe, as shee is comely in Christ.

O ye daughters of Jerusalem.

These are they unto whom she directs her speech, who (as she conceiveth) might have framed objections against her. The Church often speaketh to these daughters in diverse places of this song. We must understand by these daughters of *Jerusalem*, the friends of Christ, and of his Church. Now it was the custome of the *Jewes* to call the whole the mother, and the parts the daughters: So the Villages round about a City, are called the daughters of the Citie, *1 Chron. 7. 18.* And so *Jerusalem* which is above, is called the mother of us all, *Gal. 4. 26.* whose daughters are all particular Churches and Saints. And the children of the Church are called daughters, in that they are presented as a pure virgin to Christ, *2 Cor. 11. 2.* And *Psal. 45. 13, 14.* The Kings daughter (meaning the Church) is brought unto the King in raiment of needle-worke: the Virgins her companions follow her. Now these may be called daughters in either of these respects.

1. In that they were not so well instructed in the way of Christ, as other believers were: they were not so confirmed and grounded in the knowledge of God, or

2. They were such as were newly converted, and so not joyned to any particular congregation, or

3. They were the particular congregations, into which the Church was divided, and this agrees with the Hebrews form of speech.

Now the ground of the Churches turning her speech to these daughters, is, that they might not be offended with her blacknesse, to take off all discouragements which might befall them, by reason of the crosse;

croffe, or of weaknesse, which the Church was subject unto: so that such like things as those, might not be a cause of scandall, or of stumbling unto them.

As the Tents of Kedar.

Here we have her Comparison, by which shee doth demonstrate her blacknesse to be *as the Tents of Kedar*, Kedar was the second Son of *Ishmael*, *Genes.* 25. 13. The Kedarites which came of his race, dwelt in Tents and open Fields, where they were exposed to the scorching Sun: they were *Scenites*, being such as did wander up and down, feeding their Flocks in Tents, which they made of Goats-haire, as *Pliny* reporteth. And the Prophet saith, they dwelt in the Wildernesse, *Isa.* 42. 11.

Kedar, hath his name of blacknesse and darknesse: And *David* lamenteth that he was so long conversant in the Tents of Kedar, *Psal.* 120. 5, 6. The Church is likened to these Tents, in respect of her adversity and sorrow: hence the Church is called the *Tents of Jacob*, *Jer.* 30. 18. And the *Tents of Judah*, *Zech.* 12. 7. That is, in respect of her misery and distresse.

But we may further take notice, that these Tents were in *Arabia*, and they were very rich and glorious, as is shewn by diverse Scriptures: The Prophet *Ezekiel* saith, in *Arabia* was all kind of Merchandize, *Ezek.* 27. 21. and it was full of Flocks and Heards of Cattell, *Jer.* 40. 28. and their men were given to their Bow and to Warrs, *Isa.* 21. 13. Besides humane Histories doe largely treat of the excellent and pretious things of *Arabia deserta*. *Solinus* saith, *They buy not of others, but sell to others*. And *Plinie* reporteth, that it commeth behind no Country in the world for largenesse and greatnesse, being full of people, and richly seated; from

Plinie, nat. Hist. Lib. 6. Cap. 28.

קדר
*Obscurus,
luce priva-
tus fuit,
nigrit.*

*Aliena non
emunt, ven-
dunt sua.*

*Solinus in
Polihist c.
46.*

*Plinie nat. Hist. Lib. 7
c. Cap. 28.*

whence it hath its name *Fælix*, happy, because in it were plenty of Pearls, and Mines of gold: there was also those Trees that brought forth the sweet gums of Frankincense and myrrh; and there was all kind of sweet odours and Spices, besides plenty of Honey and Wax. Now the Church drawing her comparison from *Kedar*, may as well meane besides blacknesse, matter of desire: as if shee should say, It is true, I am black as *Kedars Tents*, yet in methere are pretious things for which I am comely and to be desired: for as *Kedars Tents* have been desired, not for their outward beauty or comeliness, being made of Goats-haire, a Stuffe very course and black: but for the most precious Jewells, and precious Stones, for riches and gold, for the sweet odours of frankincense, and myrrh, and such like pretious things as was contained in it: yea, in it was the *Phoenix* (if ever there was such a Bird in the world) who might resemble both Christ and his Church, in that there is said to be but one at a time in the World: so Christ and also his Spouse are both said to be *one*: Messiah is one, and his *Dove*, his Spouse is but one. Now I say, in that the Church doth demonstrate her blacknesse by the *Tents* of *Kedar* in *Arabia*, it may signifie, not onely her outward blacknesse, as shee seemeth to the World, by reason of sin and sorrow; but also her inward riches and glory. It is as if shee had said, I am black of colour, and outwardly void of forme or beauty, but inwardly I am comely, and much to be desired.

As the Curtaines of Solomon.

These Curtaines are to set forth her Comeliness, as *Kedars Tents* did her blacknesse. Sometimes Curtains signifie *Tents*, as the Ark of the Lord remained under Curtaines,

taines, 1 Chron. 17. 1. but *Solomons Curtaines* seem here to be meant of those Hangings that were in his house, and about his bed. *Solomon* was glorious, in riches, in wealth, and in honour: he built great Houses, set Gardens, Planted Vineyards, and Trees of all sorts; he was glorious in his Man-servants and Maids, and had Children born in his House, &c. *Ecclef.* 2. 4, 5. Now as all that *Solomon* had was glorious, so in all probability his Curtaines (or Hangings) were answerable to all the rest of his glory.

Josephus saith, that *Solomons Chambers* were adorned with Planks of Carved Cedar, and of stone, and of curious Marble. And (saith he) that which made it more beautifull, were three panes of Tapistry, and the fourth admirable for artificiall engraving: it seemeth that the inward Hangings were more rich, then those that were more outwardly. This sets forth to us the surpassing glory of the Church, who shines in the graces of Christ, which exceeds all ordinary glory. So though the Church be black outwardly like the Tents of *Kedar*, yet shee is inwardly beautifull as *Solomons Curtaines*. Let us collect some Observations from hence.

First, from the Churches confession, *I am black*, &c. Observe,

That sin and the effects thereof, to wit, trouble and sorrow, doth very much darken and overcloud the Saints of God. You heard that sin was darknesse it selfe, and therefore darknesse must needs follow it: nothing doth more debase and deforme men then sin, and the effects of it. Hence it is *David* complaineth, *Mine eyes are consumed because of griefe, it waxeth old because of all mine Enemies.* *Psal.* 6. 7. That is, his affliction and trouble did cast him very low, so that he was like some old deformed

man that had lost his eyes. And Christ counselleth the Church of *Laodicea*, to buy of him *white Rayment*, that shee might be *cloathed*, and that the *shame* of her nakednesse might not appear, *Revel. 3. 18.* That is, take a cloathing of white rayment. (to wit, of holinesse and righteousnesse) that so thy defects and defaults be not discovered, and lie open to thy disgrace. Thus it is said of the people of Israel, that *Moses* saw that they were naked: For *Aaron* had made them naked into their shame, amongst their Enemies, *Exod. 32. 25.* That is, their sin was discovered as the deformity of a naked man, who wanteth cloaths to cover it: or they were naked as being stript of the chiefe Ornament of their souls: to wit, righteousness and holinesse. And the Lord saith in *Ezek. 23. 29.* I will discover the nakednesse of thy *Whoredomes*. That is, I will make knowne thy shamefull forsaking of me, to serve Idolls. Nothing in the World doth so much deform men, as sin doth; it defiles the Conscience, it darkens the understanding, it overshadows the affections: yea, it defiles the whole man, from top to toe (as we use to say) it makes him altogether unbecomfull and deformed.

Secondly Observe, from the Churches confession, That true Christians are ingenious to acknowledge their own defects. The Daughters of *Jerusalem* were prevented in laying this charge upon the Church, by her own confession. There are two special grounds of this ingenuity in the Saints.

First, the glory of God: hereupon *Jesus* exhorteth *Achan* to this duty: *My Son, give glory to God, &c.* We honour God exceedingly by acknowledging our owne defects; we shew forth the honour of his mercy that will not take every advantage against us, the honour of his

his power to pardon; the honour of his faithfullnesse, in that he keepeth Covenant with sinfull Creatures: the honour of his wilddome in knowing all things, even the very secrets of the heart: yea, we give God the glory of all his Attributes, for in debasing our selves we lift up Gods glory.

Secondly, the Saints doe by confession ease their owne Consciences: this we see, in the example of David, Psal. 32. 3, 4, 5. *When I kept silence (sayth he) my Eones waxed old: I was in great distemper of Spirit, and unquiet in my body, My moisture was turned into the drought of Summer: that is meant of an airy substance, whereby the life is cherished, which if it be spent it causeth death: now for ease in this condition, what course doth he take? I said (saith he) I will confesse my sin, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin: hereby the Saints doe not onely glorifie God, but also obtaine rest and peace in their owne souls.*

Thirdly Observe,

The Saints are deformed, and without beauty to the outward view of the World. The carnall eye seeth no beauty at all in the Disciples of Christ; they appeare in the same forme that Christ appeared in to the World: in respect of the sufferings of Christ: the Prophet speaketh thus. *His Visage was so marred more then any man, and his forme more then the Sonnes of men,* Isa. 52. 14. That is, he had no respect or estimation in the eyes of worldly men: *He seemed a Worme and no man,* Psal. 22. 6. Again, the Prophet brings in worldly men speaking thus of Christ, *He hath no forme nor comeliness, and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him,* Isa. 53. 2. And therefore he is despised and rejected of men, &c. Verf. 3. That is, he was scarce accounted worthy
the

the name of a man, or to be reckoned among the number of men. Now if the men of the World could see no beauty in Christ, much lesse can they see any beauty in his Servants; if they cannot see beauty in the head, much lesse in the body; if Christ were accounted a dry saplesse Tree, what esteem can there be of the branches; *If they call the master of the House Belzebub, how much more shall they call them of his Household,* saith Christ, *Mat. 10. 25. And if the World hate you, yee know* (saith he) *that it hated me before it hated you,* John 15. 18. Hence it is that the Apostle saith, *We are made as the filth of the World,* and are the offscouring of all things, 1 Cor. 4. 13. The Apostle useth two words to expresse the vile account that the World have of the Saints, towit, *filth* and *offscouring*: the words are of a like import, and doe signifie properly filth or dirt scraped off mens shoes, or from the pavement of the ground. It also signifies (saith godly Master *Borroughs*) the *Dung-cart* that goes through the City, into which every one brings his filth and casts in. So that it is as much as if the Apostle had said, we are despiseable and odious to the outward view of the People, and loaden with reproaches and revilings not worthy to be accounted of, or esteemed among men: yea, as men not fit to live in the World.

But comely.

Hence Observe,

Though the Saints are black in themselves, yet they are faire in Christ. Else they were not fit to match with Jesus Christ; it is confessed they are black of themselves, but when Christ comes to marry the soule unto himselfe, he putteth a kind of divine lustre and beauty upon it, whereby he makes it glorious like himselfe, yet it's true
that

Τεπιζθ-
αqua
Πεπι-
Sordes, pur-
gamentum.

M^r. Bor-
roughs in
his Moies
Choice.

that we have sinned and have come short of the glory of God; but Christ restoreth this glory in us againe: this is that the Apostle telleth us, when he saith, *Christ loved the Church and gave himselfe for it*, even as a Husband giveth himselfe unto his Wife: but to what end doth Christ thus give himselfe unto his Church? *That he might sanctifie and cleanse it with the washing of water, by the word: that he might present it to himselfe a glorious Church (or Spouse) not having spot or wrinckle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish*, Ephes. 5. 26, 27. And againe he saith, Col. 1. 22. *Christ hath reconciled us in the body of his flesh through death, to present us holy & unblameable, & unreprouable in his sight*. The Saints are thus glorious in the eyes of Christ in two respects.

First, in respect of Justification, so they are absolutely faire and compleat in him. They are absolutely freed and discharged of sin, being cloathed with Christs righteousness, they shine forth most gloriously in the beauty thereof. And in this sence the Church is pure and undefiled in this World, and yet not free from sinfull imperfection. But still we must remember our beauty is not connaturall with us, but it is a derivative and a borrowed beauty: the Saints who are the Members, shine in the glory and dignity of him that is head; and the Church who is the Spouse of Christ, shineth in the beauty of him who is her Husband.

Secondly, the Church is comely in sanctification; shee is not onely faire from Christs fairnesse, and from his imputative righteousness, but also in those graces which shee hath received from Christ, even in those inherent graces infused into her soule by the Spirit of grace. Sanctification is a restoring of the Image and of the

the glory of God in mans heart, making of it conformable and like unto the image of God: so saith the Apostle, Col. 3. 10. *Having put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the Image of him that created him.* Now the new man here spoken of, is nothing but the changing of the will to holinesse and righteousnesse, wherein consisteth the image of God.

Secondly, in that the Church doth set forth her fairness, by opposing it against her blacknesse, Observe *That the Churches fairness appears the more, in that it is opposed to her deformity.* Thus it is in nature, those that are beautifull appeare to be so most of all, when they are compared to them that are deformed. As that which is evill appears to be more evill when it is set against that which is good: so that which is good, appeareth to be more good, when it is set against that which is evill. The Apostle saith, *That sin by the Commandment became exceeding sinfull,* Rom. 7. 13. The Law (saith he) is holy, just, and good, and sin wrought in me death by that which is good. That is, by the Law, *Was that the which is good made death unto me,* God forbid saith he, *but sin, that it might appeare sin.* That is, being opposed to a holy Law. And so the Apostle speaketh in respect of the grace of God, *Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound,* Rom. 5. 20. That is, grace did not onely countervaille with sin, but above measure out-passed it. *So that if sin reigned unto death, even so might grace reigne unto eternall life.* The power of grace appeareth to be more potent when it's opposed to the power of sin. As black spots in the face make it shew the fairer, so the deformity of the Church makes her beauty to be the greater. It must be excellent beauty that must cover such deformity; it must be infinite and divine beauty that can make

the Church, in the middest of sin and sorrow, say, *I am comely.*

As the tents of Kedar : as the curtains of Solomon.

Now forasmuch as the Church doth illustrate her blacknesse by the tents of *Kedar*, or by those that dwell in those tents, who though they were black in colour, yet very rich in precious things, as gold, and precious gems: Observe,

That though the Church be deformed and blaek outwardly, yet shee is very desireable and beautifull inwardly.

Notwithstanding. *Kedar's* tents were not desireable; yet *Kedar* was full of riches and substance, for which it might be desired. So the Saints, although they are disesteem'd by the world, yet they are desireable of Christ. *The Kings daughter is all glorious within*, Psal. 45. 14. That is, shee hath her heart adorned with divine grace, as faith, hope, love, &c. The Apostle prayed that the *Ephesians* might be strengthened in the inner man, and that *Christ* might dwell in their hearts by faith, Ephes. 3. 16, 17. And again he saith in 2 Cor. 4. 16. *For this cause we faint not; but though the outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.* By the outward man is meant our bodies, our persons, and condition by nature, which is much depressed by sin and misery: and by the inner man, he meaneth the regenerate part, which is renewed by the holy Ghost, and also strengthened daily, to beare pressures and afflictions. The Temple at *Jerusalem* was a type both of Christ and of the Christian Church, and the greatest glory was inward, in the holy of holies; and all the glorious Vessels in the Tabernacle did prefigure the glory of the Saints.

2. Whereas she doth illustrate her beauty by *Solomons* curtains, observe: *The graces of Messiah are far more glorious then all the glory of the world.*

The curtains of *Solomon*, unto which the allusion is made, must needs be very glorious, answerable to the rest of his glory. Wee read in Scripture, that there was no glory in the world comparable to his glory; the Queen of *Sheba* was astonished when she beheld it. Also we may understand by the tapistry or curtains of *Solomon*, all the glory of his house, of which we read of, *1 King. 10. 1, 2.* How surpassing them must the glory of those graces be, which Christ adorneth his Saints withall, whereof *Solomons* curtains was but an earthly shadow or type. Now if the spirituall comelines and beauty of the Spouse, now in the time of her blacknesse and imperfection be comparable unto, yea, far beyond *Solomons* curtains, and all his royalty besides: what will her beauty be, when all her blackness shall be taken away, and when she shall appear in her full and everlasting beauty, being cleansed from all her spots and dimnesse, yea when shee will shine in glory, in the sight of all her beholders.

O see daughters of Jerusalem.

This shee speaks to strengthen and confirme those that were weake, and not so well grounded or confirmed in the knowledg of Christ; to the end she might remove all occasion of scandall, which otherwise might have been a cause of stumbling unto these daughters of *Jerusalem*.

Observe hence,

That those that are strong Christians, should by all means endeavour to strengthen and confirm those that are weak.

Here

Here the Church seeks to satisfie the daughters of *Jerusalem* concerning her blackness, by telling them that notwithstanding her blacknesse, yet she was desirable.

An example of this we have in Christ, when he sheweth what a hinderance riches are in the way of the Kingdome of God, *Matth. 19. 23, 24.* Christ counsel-eth the young man to *sell all that he had, and give to the poore*: the Text saith, *he went away sorrowfull, for he had great possessions.* Presently upon this, Christ turned to his Disciples, and said, *That a rich man shall hardly enter into the Kingdome of heaven.* Now the aime and drift of Christ was, to uphold the spirits of his Disciples, in respect of their poverty, *having left all to follow him.* And on the contrary, the Apostle saith, *give none offence neither to the Jewes, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God.* That is, do not scandalize any by the use of your liberty, whether they be without, or within the Church; but rather labour to win them by love. And again, for his own particular he saith, *I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, rather then make my brother offend,* 1 Cor. 8. 13. That is, as if he had said, I will rather abstain for ever from all kind of flesh, then put a stumbling-block before, or give occasion of sin to any of my brethren. So in *Rom. 15. 1.* *We then that are strong* (saith the Apostle) *ought to beare the infirmities of the weak, and not to please our selves.*

VER. 6.

Looke not upon me, because I am blacke, because the Sunne hath looked upon me: my mothers children were angry with me, they made me the keeper of the vineyards, but mine owne vineyard have I not kept.

NOW the Church proceedeth unto a more full answer unto this supposed objection that might have been made against her: and that because none should impair her dignity or worth, or more lightly regard or esteem of her. And this she doth,

1. By admonition unto the daughter of Jerusalem, in these words, *Looke not upon me, because I am blacke.*

2. She rendereth a reason of her admonition; and that is drawn from the cause of her blackness, which is three-fold.

1. The supream cause; *The sunne hath looked upon me.*

2. The instrumentall cause, *My mothers children, &c.*

3. The impulsive cause; *My owne vineyard have I not kept.*

Looke not upon me, &c.

The Church continueth her speech to the daughters of *Jerusalem*, desiring them not to look upon her so as to be discouraged from joyning with her in the service of Christ, notwithstanding all her deformities, which outwardly make her deformed: but rather to have their eyes upon *Messiah*, in whose beauty and glory shee is also decked and adorned.

The

The word fignifies to fee with great obfervation, or to fee with great curiofity, with delight, and with fense and feeling: and therefore in that fhe faith, *Look not upon me, or behold me not*: that is

תבטל

1. With difdain; do not behold me with contempt and fcorn, becaufe of my blackneffe. Thus it is fpoken of *Leviathan* in *Job* 42. 34. *Hee beholdeth all high things*: that is, he fcorneth & defpifeth all other beafts; he feareth none, and is the proudeft of all others: and the Lord is faid to *look upon the proud afarre off*. That is, with great difdain and contempt.

2. Look not upon me with triumph and rejoycing over me, as in *Obad.* verf. 12. *Thou fhouldft not have looked on the day of thy brother*. It was fpoken concerning *Edom*, becaufe he magnified himfelfe in the day of *Israel*'s diftreffe; and it is fpoken of the enemies of the Church, when they gathered againft *Israel*. *Mic.* 4. 11. *Let her be defiled (fay they) let our eye looke upon Zion*: that is, we will fatisfie our felves in her defilement; let her be defiled, and we will rejoyce.

3. Looke not upon mee with amazement, be not affrighted or aftonifhed at my blackneffe. Affliction is called *the wine of aftonifhment*, *Pfal.* 60. 3. meaning they were drunken with afflictions, which caufed horroure and aftonifhment, as drunkenneffe with wine caufeth staggering and giddineffe. Hence it is, the Apostle doth labour to confirm the Saints in the faith: *That (faith he) no man fhould be moved by thefe afflictions*: for *your felves know, that we are appointed thereunto*, *1 Thes.* 3. 3. That is, we are ordained, that we fhould be conformable unto *Chrift*: firft in fufferings, after in glory; therefore (faith he) let not thefe things move you from the faith.

Because:

Because I am blacke.

שחרת
רַחַת

*Subnigra,
quod sin sub-
nigra, so iun.
translates
it.*

The form of the Hebrew word here, differeth from that in the former verse, and seemeth to diminish the signification, and signifies *somewhat blacke, or blackish*; by this the Church would signifie, that her blacknesse was not such, as that she might be contemned or disdained for it: her blacknesse was but an outside blacknesse; though her skin was black, yet her inside was faire, and that outward blacknesse of hers was not her proper colour neither, but by accident, and therefore she proceedeth to give the reasons of her blacknesse.

Because the sunne hath looked upon mee.

Hereby are meant persecutions and afflictions: so it is expounded by Christ himselfe, *Matth. 13. 6. 21* *When the sunne was up: that is (saith Christ) when persecution and tribulation ariseth, because of the world.* The *Sunne hath looked upon me*: that is, God hath looked upon me in anger and displeasure; and therefore *O ye daughters*, do not you look disdainfully upon me, because I am blackish, and of a darke hue; for this colour is not so much naturall to mee, as caused by the scorching heat of affliction, wherewith I have been often sun-burnt and scorched: neither was this altogether my own defect, but by the envy and deceit of my false brethren. Hence shee proceedeth to declare the second, to wit, the instrumentall cause of her blacknesse.

בני אמי
*Filij matris
meae, Arius
Montanus.*

My mothers children were angry with me.

Arius Montanus renders it, the sonnes of my mother.
Some

Some question there is, who they be, whom ſhe calleth the *ſonnes* of her *mother*.

Fiſt, Some have taken it, that ſhe calleth originall ſin, even all thoſe concupiſcences of the fleſh, all thoſe inordinate luſts & ſins, which are in all the elect from the womb, her mothers ſonnes; for by theſe ſhee was forced to commit many ſinnes, and to omit many good things, by which meanes her glory and beauty was very much dim'd and darkned. Now the Apoſtle telleth us of the *luſts that warre in our members*, Jam. 4. 1. and of *fleſhly luſts that warre againſt the ſoule*, 1 Pet. 2. 11. And ſaith Paul, *I find a law, that when I would doe good, evil is preſent with me*, Rom. 7. 21. And all this ariſeth from that originall concupiſcence which is in the elect from the womb; according to that of *Pſal. 51. 5. I was ſhapen in iniquity (ſaid David) and in ſinne did my mother conceive me*. Now this is true concerning concupiſcence; but I do not conceive how it can here be called the ſons of her Mother: becauſe in this Song ſhe doth often call the Church her Mother; and therefore it may the rather be underſtood, that ſhe meaneth by her *mothers ſonnes*, thoſe degenerate children, which profeſſe themſelves to be children of the Church; but are falſe Brethren, falſe Prophets, and deceivers: ſuch as theſe might be called the children of her Mother, but not of her Father, becauſe they were degenerate: they were ſuch as do profeſſe faith and godlineſſe, but doe deſperately oppoſe the ſame. Of ſuch David complaineth; *I am become a ſtranger unto my brethren, and an alien to my mothers ſons*, Pſ. 69. 9. That is, their carriage and eſtimation towards him, was as toward a ſtranger whom they knew not. And the Apoſtle ſaith, *Of your owne ſelves ſhall men ariſe ſpeaking perverſe things, to draw away*

away Disciples after them, Acts 20. 30. So that such as were neer in relation to the Church, and pretended much, such as they were angry with her.

Were angry with me.

Arius Montanus renders it; *succensi sunt in me*, they were enflamed in me. *Furius*, *accensi ira contra me*, they were incensed against mee with indignation. The word signifies to *burne* or be *enflamed* with indignation, or with griefe. Thus it is used in *Psal.* 37. 1. *Fret not thy selfe, &c.* That is, *enflame not, burn not thy selfe with anger, or griefe.* And we have the same word in *Prov.* 24. 19. *Fret not thy selfe because of evill men; doe not enflame thy self with them:* It noteth also enflammation of choler, so it is used in *Psal.* 2. 5. *He shall vex them in his sore displeasure:* That is, he will vex and trouble them in his enflamed displeasure. Again, it signifies such an enflammation, as to fight, or make war; so it's used in *Isa.* 41. 11. *All they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed.* It is meant of outward enemies, that made war against *Israel*: Now by this we may perceive with what great vehemency and indignation, with what burning heat and choler these false Brethren, false Prophets, and false Priests were set against the Church, they were incensed with wrath and envy against her, as appears by their carriage towards her, they seduced and led her aside; which indeed is the third, to wit, the impulsive cause of her affliction and blacknesse.

They made me the keeper of the vineyards, but my own vineyard have I not kept.

פָּשַׁע
Posuit, appo-
suit, imposu-
it, statuit
collocavit.

They made me: They did constitute or assigne mee, they put me: that is, they did impose it upon me, they did set

set me upon this work, as Task-Masters use to doe: also they assigned me, as to an Office; thus they made the Church their Servant to observe their fancies and pleasures. *They made me.* That is, they assigned, enforced, and constrained me to observe their devices and pleasures, or else to suffer their cruelty and wrath.

The keeper of the Vineyards.

It is a hard Taske they impose on the Church: for nothing is more laborious then the Husbandry of the Vineyard. Therefore saith Christ, *Why stand yee idle? goe work in the Vineyard,* Mat. 20. 6. And they that have laboured in the Vineyard doe complain how they have borne the *burden and heat of the day.* The Kingdome of God is likened to a *Vineyard* let out to Husbandmen, Mat. 21. 33. And in *Song 8. 11,* *Solomon let out his Vineyard to keepers.* And in the Captivity of *Babylon*, the poore of the Land were left to be Vine-dressers, and Husbandmen, 2 Kings 25. 12. This notes the grievous bondage and oppression the Church was under, in respect of carnall and humane Ordinances, which were imposed on her, by those great pretenders to Religion, towit, her *Mothers Sons*, false Prophets and Brethren.

גמל
Custodivit,
observavit.

Of the Vineyards.

By the Vineyards which shes here opposeth to her owne Vineyard; seemeth to be meant of false Churches, and of all corruption and superstition used in them: into which shes was seduced and brought by her Mothers Sonnes, who set her to observe humane Ordinances and Traditions. Thus the Pharisees *made the word of God of none effect, through their Traditions,* Mark. 7. 13.

The Church in a spirituall sence is often called a *Vineyard,*

yard, Psal. 80. 8. *Thou hast brought a Vine out of Egypt.* That is, a Church, the Common-wealth of Israel. And the Vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are his pleasant plant, Isa. 5. 7. So in opposition to the Lords Vineyard, to wit, his Church; false Churches, and false Worshippers, are called Vineyards.

But my owne Vineyard I have not kept.

My Vineyard that is mine, or, that belongeth to me. That is, that was given me in trust, of God, and committed to my charge. The Apostle exhorts *Timothy*, to keep that which was committed to his charge, 1 Tim. 6. 20. That is meant of the precious Treasure of holy doctrine, and the Talent: of those gifts by which he was enabled to dispense the word of life. And the Apostle saith, the Gospell was committed to his trust, 1 Tim. 1. 11. And saith he, *The Gospell of uncircumcision was committed unto me*, Gal. 2. 7. And a dispensation of the Gospell is committed unto me, 1 Cor. 9. 17. Hence he calleth it, *My Gospell*, Rom. 2. 16. So here the Church calleth it her Vineyard: that is, those Ordinances and Laws which God gave me to keep; those things which he did intrust me withall, even in those things I have been defective.

I have not kept.

I have not with faith, diligence, and observation, kept those things which God hath committed to my trust, but I have been negligent, and carelesse, and fruitlesse; and that partly by the impositions of such as hated me, and tyrannized over me, drawing of me aside to observe humane rights and traditions; and partly through my owne weaknesse, to comply and yield to the

כרמי
טרי

Vineam
meam, quæ
mihi Arius
Montan.

the corruptions of the times, for feare of persecution, or for love of the World: In that I have been slothfull and sluggish in keeping that which was committed to my trust. The wise man speaketh of the sloathfull mans Vineyard thus, *I went up by the field of the sloathfull, and by the Vineyard of the man void of understanding: and lo, it was all growne over with thornes, &c.* Prov. 24. 30, 31. So the Church here had been sloathfull and carelesse of her Vineyard: she was over-run with the weeds of sin and superstition, and with the Thornes and nettles of persecution. Now this sheweth out as the last cause of her blacknesse and deformity; namely, her not keeping well her owne Vineyard. Now let us prooceed to the Observations that these words thus opened will afford us.

First, *Looke not upon me*; that is, not with disdain or contempt.

Hence Observe,

That we ought not to disdain or contemne our Brethren in Affliction. To him that is in affliction (saith Job) pitty should be shewed from his Friends, Job 6. 12. It is in the Originall, *To him that is melted*; for afflictions melt the heart of man, and therefore pitty ought to be shewne: The word translated pitty signifies a pious affection of mercy, goodnesse, and pity: so that Bowells of compassion ought rather to be shewn to Brethren in misery, then contempt and disdain.

רחם
Pietas, bonitas, benignitas.

Secondly, *Looke not upon me*: that is, with triumph and rejoycing over me.

Hence Observe,

As we ought not to disdain, much lesse should we triumph or rejoyce at the affliction of our Brethren. This was a brand upon Edom the Posterity of Esau, where the Lord saith,

Thou shouldest not have looked on the day of thy Brother, Obad. Vers. 12. That is, thou shouldest not have insulted and triumphed over thy Brethren, to wit, the Children of Israel, and of the seed of Jacob, who was Brother to Esau their Father. The contrary is that for which Doeg the Edomite was sharply reprehended, for in Psal. 52. 1. *Why boastest thou thy selfe in mischief, O mighty man?* That is, why dost thou insult and vaunt in thy wickednesse, and that because the Lords Priests were slaine by the hand of Saul: the word signifies, to vaunt, insult, or to rage like a mad man: and therefore foolish and vaine glorious Boasters, are called in Hebrew *Holelim*, which cometh of the root *Halal*, to praise or extoll: but when men are lifted up at evill, then it is folly and madnesse: as all they that rejoyce at the affliction of the Saints, shall find it to be nothing but folly and madnesse in the end.

Thirdly, *Look not upon me* with horreur and astonishment,

Againe Observe,

The afflictions, or the deformities of the Saints, should not dishearten, or drive us off from the wayes of Christ. If our owne afflictions should not make us flag or faile, much lesse the afflictions of others: the Apostle comforteth the Saints in that they were tempted and tried: *There hath no temptation taken you (saith he) but such as is common to man.* By temptation he meaneth affliction and persecution, whereby their faith was tried, as Gold in the fire; and (saith he) *such afflictions are common to man.* That is, it is no more then is incident to man, as man: you might have had as great afflictions as any you have endured, even as you are men: for as men, you are subject to as great afflictions as any that have befallen

הלל
Splenduit,
metaphorice
laudavit, ce-
lebravit,
per anti-
phrasin.

Insanus, in-
sanivit,
Unde
Halle lu-
jah, praise
ye Jah.

befallen you : but saith he, *God is faithfull, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able.* That is, God will so moderate the affliction, and prevent you with grace and strength, which shall inable you to beare the temptation, *And with the temptation will make a way to escape.* He will give an issue together with the temptation, 1 Cor. 10. 13. now if the Saints have no affliction, but such as they might have had, as they were men; and that affliction measured out to their strength, or their strength raised according to the temptation; and in that they are not onely kept under, but delivered out of affliction, there is nothing in the afflictions of the Saints, if well considered, that may dishearten or discourage us in the ways of Christ.

The Church saith no lesse her selfe in the Text, *Looke not upon me with astonishment and feare, Because I am blackish, or somewhat black:* as if shee had said, my blacknesse is not so much as to trouble or amaze you: I am not altogether black, though my outside be something blackish, yet my inside is faire and beautifull. Hence Observe,

That there is no evill sufficient in the afflictions or deformities of the Saints, as to be a stumbling block unto us, either to cause us to disclaime them, or to feare the like afflictions. The evill of sin is the greatest evill, and the evill of affliction is but a fruit of the evill of sin. Now the Apostle doth triumph both over sin and affliction, 1 Cor. 15. 55, 56. *O death where is thy sting? O grave or hell where is thy Victory?* Now he tells us the evill of both these is taken away, *The sting of death is sin.* That is, sin is death's weapon, by which it is armed against us; but when sin is taken away, the sting of death is also taken away: But how comes sin to be so prevalent and strong? The
Apostle

Apostle telleth us, *The strength of sin is the Law*: That is, sin is not imputed to us but by the Law, and our flesh doth alwayes oppose that which is commanded. But (saith he) *thanks be to God which giveth us the Victory through Jesus Christ our Lord*. Now mark what the Apostles Exhortation is upon this, *Therefore my Brethren be yee stedfast and unmoveable*; let nothing cause you to forsake the way of Christ, it is not affliction or sin shall hinder your acceptance with him. *Forasmuch* (saith he) *as you know, your labour is not in vaine in the Lord*.

The afflictions of the Saints are but something like afflictions, they are not afflictions themselves, they are but the outsidcs of afflictions, the sting and evill of them is taken away. Thus the Apostle affirmeth in 2 Cor. 4. 8, 9, 10. *We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed*: That is, though we are beset round with trouble, yet God gives an issue, and makes a way for escape: *We are perplexed, but not in despaire*, we are never without hope, *Persecuted but not forsaken*, the Angell of Gods presence going alwayes before us: *cast downe, but not destroyed*: though affliction may keep us under, yet it shall never consume us. And againe the Apostle saith in 2 Cor. 6. 8, 9, 10. *As deceivers and yet true, as unknowne, and yet well knowne, as dying, and behold we live, as chastened, and not killed, as sorrowfull, yet alwayes rejoycing, as poore, yet making many rich, as having nothing, & yet possessing all things*. They were not so indeed, but reputed to be such: or they were like unto those that were so indeed, but they had but the shaddow of afflictions. Hence it is, saith the Apostle, that we faint not: *though the outward man perissh, yet the inward man is renewed day by day*, 2 Cor. 4. 16. We have new supplies of strength every day: And saith the Apostle, our afflictions are but light, but our glory which

we expect is weighty : our afflictions are but momentary, but our glory is eternall, that our glory far exceedeth our afflictions.

Because the Sun hath looked upon me,

The Church gives a reason of her blacknesse, to the end the Daughters of *Jerusalem* might not be offended with her: and that because shee was under the scorching Sun of Persecution.

Hence Observe,

The afflictions of the Saints are many times causes of offence to weake Christians. As for such as are meant in the Parable of the stony ground, they are wholly offended, when the Sun of Persecution ariseth on them, *mat. 13. 21.* but not onely such, but the Saints themselves, by reason of weaknesse are much cast downe: *All of you (saith Christ to his Disciples) shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written (saith he) I will smite the Shepheard, and the Sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad, Mat. 26. 31.* By reason of their weaknesse their hearts fail'd them, and they left Christ. But this proceedeth from the distemper of their spirits, and from the flesh: for they ought rather to doe, as the Apostle saith of himselfe and the rest of the Saints, *Being justified by faith, we rejoyce in tribulation, knowing that tribulation bringeth experience, experience patience, patience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, Rom. 5. 3.* So that we being justified and freed from sin, and from the evill of affliction, it should make afflictions and tribulation so wellcome unto us, as that we should not be troubled or moved at them.

Secondly Observe,

That it is incident to the most godly in the World, to have tribulation:

tribulation and affliction in the flesh. So saith the Apostle, *All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.* Tim. 3. 12. And therefore it is, that Christ asked his Disciples, whether they could be *Baptized with his Baptisme*, and withall tells them that they should *drink of his Cup*, and *baptised with his baptisme*, Mat. 20. 22, 23. That is, you shall indure afflictions like to mine, and such as shall be my entertainment in the World, the same shall be yours: And againe he saith, if we will be his Disciples, we must take up our crosse, and follow him, Mat. 16. 24. there are many that seeing the crosse, will step out of the way, but saith Christ, my Disciples must not goe out of my way to shun the crosse, but rather take it up and follow me, *who have endured the crosse and despised the shame*, Heb. 12. 2. for the afflictions which we suffer in this life, are not worthy of the glory which shall be revealed, Rom. 8. 18. Satan desired to sift Peter as wheat, Luke 22. 31. Now wheat is one of the purest sorts of graine, and therefore requireth the most sifting: So the Saints, and the purest of them, doe many times endure the greatest siftings and trialls.

Now although God doth dispense outward things alike to all, and causeth the sun to shine, and the raine to fall, upon the good and upon the bad: yet he hath different ends, and worketh severall effects by thus his dealing. He afflicts the Saints to purge and purifie them, but he afflicts the wicked to destroy them. As Gold is purged by the fire, so by fire is stubble consumed: as Wheat is cleansed by sifting, so chaffe is scattered abroad: as the Sun causeth a dirty Channell to stinke, so it causeth the sweet flowers to give a fragrant smell. Hence it is that Job saith, *When he hath tried me I shall come forth like Gold*, Job 23. 10. God doth cha-

stise his people, saith *Augustine*, that we should not bee over-greedy of these things, which in this world are common to the wicked; neither with baseness and reproach shun those evils, which wee see for the most part happen to the godly.

My mothers children were angry with mee.

Such as were neerly related to her, and did professe themselves of the same faith, and had been of one society with her. Hence observe,

1. *The greatest enemies of the Church are such as are the neereſt in relation unto her.*

Where there is the greatest sympathy, when divided, turns to the greatest antipathy. Hereof *David* complaineth, *I am become* (saith he) *a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mothers sonnes*, *Psal. 69. 9.* Such was the enmity of *Cain* towards *Abel*, of *Eſau* towards *Jacob*, of *Absolom* towards *David*: and as in naturall relations, so it is in civill relations, and in some sort in spiritual relations; for they that professe themselves of the Church, are great enemies unto them that are faithfull in their own Society.

Secondly, Observe,

That the greatest pretenders to religion & holinesſe, prove many times the greatest enemies to the same.

Many will pretend godlinesse, and yet are haters of that godlinesse which they do pretend. The Prophet describeth such as these in *Iſa. 48. 1, 2.* *Such* (saith he) *are called by the name of Iſrael, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah, which ſwear by the name of the Lord, and make mention of the God of Iſrael, but not in truth, nor in righteousneſſe, For they call themselves of the holy Citie, &c.* Here we have a people as formall as possible can

August. de civit. dei, lib. 1. cap. 9. Vi nec bona cupidinis appellantur, quæ mali quoque habere continentur, nec mala turpiter evitentur, quibus & boni plerumque afficiuntur.

be, they are called by the name of Israel, they glory and rest in legall shadows; and they did swear by God, professing to serve him, by making mention of his name: they loved to be named by the holy City of Jerusalem, but all this was not in righteousness; but they used all these things falsely, and to deceive: Such were the false Prophets, and false Brethren of the Jewish Church: such were the Scribes and Pharisees in Christs time: None pretended more holiness and strictness in respect of outward formes, then the Pharisees did. *Josephus* saith, they used a very austere and strict kind of life, & did not adiect themselves to any delicacy, but diligently follow that which their reason induceth them unto: they honour their Elders, neither dare they reply, or reproach them for their admonitions. Beside, the Scripture sheweth how strict they were in legall observances: *I was as touching the law* (saith Paul) *a Pharisee: concerning zeale, persecuting the Church, and touching the righteousness of the law blamelesse*, Phil. 3. 5, 6. Paul had a zeale, but not according to knowledge; and therefore none more forward to persecute the Saints then Paul; none more greater enemies to Christ then the Scribes and Pharisees; none more opposite to the Apostles, then the devout Jew, one that was zealous for legall observances.

Such have been all Popish Priests and Prelates; and such are all those, of whatsoever form, distinction, or name they be of, that impose superstitious orders under the Gospel: Let them pretend order, or uniformity, or whatsoever; yet if they impose humane inventions, so as to urge and presse them upon the consciences of Saints, they are the greatest enemies of the Saints of Christ.

Thirdly,

Josephus
Antiq. lib.
10. cap. 2.

3. Observe, *Those that are neareſt in relation to the Saints, and thoſe that pretend moſt holineſſe, if ſuch prove falſe brethren, they afflict and hurt the Saints moſt of all.*

1. Such are moſt apt to ſeduce them, & draw them from the truth: ſo the Apoſtle ſaith, *Of among your ſelves ſhall men ariſe, ſpeaking perverſe things, drawing Diſciples after them,* Acts 20. 30.

Joſephus in his Book of Antiquities, reporteth; that when *Jeruſalem* was beſieged by the *Romans*, the Jewes received more dammage by their ſeverall diviſions within their City, then from the *Romans* without, who were their beſiegers: ſo a falſe brother doth more endanger the welfare of the Saints, then an open Enemy.

2. Such as are falſe brethren doe not onely ſeduce the Saints, but grievouſly afflict them: they know how to ſtrike, where it will moſt ſmart; they know the conſcience to be the moſt tender place, and therefore aime to oppreſſe that moſt. When any of our late Biſhops had a mind to perſecute the Saints, they would make uſe of one that had profeſſed Religion; and having apoſtatized, knew the better how to vex the Saints; he knowing the moſt tender place, would lay the burthen upon it.

Julian the Apoſtate did the Saints more hurt, then any perſecutor beſide: ſo none was more fit to betray Chriſt, then *Judas*.

4. Obſerve, *That falſe brethren perſecute with the greateſt heat and indignation.*

Of this the Church complaineth here; *my mothers ſonnes were angry with me*: they were incenſed with indignation, and with burning heat and choler; with wrath and envy they were ſet againſt her. So the Apoſtle

ಎರಡನೆಯದಾಗಿ
ಒಳಗಾಗಿ.

stle faith, *he persecuted the Church with zeale*, Phil. 3. 6. Zeale carries in it a spirit of indignation. *Acts 5. 17. The high Priest rose up (against the Apostles) with indignation.* It is in the Originall, *they rose up, being filled with zeale*, because zeale carries a spirit of indignation along with it. And the Text saith, *Paul breathed out threatening and slaughter against the Disciples of the Lord, Act. 9. 1.* Which phrase of breathing out threatnings importeth a vehement heat, of a heart enraged, and burning with indignation.

They made me, &c.

They did assigne or constitute me, they did impose or put upon me the keeping of the Vineyards. Hence observe,

1. *That those false pretenders to Religion (before spoken of) doe use coercion and compulsion to constraine others to observe their wayes.*

This is like Nebuchadnezzar, who commanded all to worship the golden image, or else they were to be cast into the middest of a burning fiery furnace, Dan. 3. 6. The Apostle was not of this mind, when he saith, *we have not dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy*, 2 Cor. 1. 24. By this the Apostle sheweth, that what he was to deliver unto them in the preaching of the Gospel, he did it not as a Lord over them, but as a servant sent by Jesus Christ to administer joy and comfort unto them: and withall sheweth, that the Gospel is a Gospel of peace and of joy in the holy Ghost: Now if the Apostles might not Lord it over the conscience, much lesse those that be inferiour to the Apostles, and of much lesse infallibility then they. And again he saith, *Ye are bought with a price, be not yee the servants of men;*

1 Cor.

1 Cor. 7. 23. That is, doe not enslave your consciences to men, in matters divine, because hee that redeemed you is King alone over your spirits. Now these false members being enraged against the Church, they forced her to serve their fancies and pleasures. But the Gospel knows no such way of coercion or compulsion, it useth no violence to compell men; but it shall prosper, *because of truth, meeknesse, and righteousness*, Psalm. 45. 4.

The keeper of the Vineyards.

It is a hard task they impose upon the Church; nothing is more laborious then the husbandry of a Vineyard.

Hence observe,

That the pressures and burthens which false brethren impose upon the Saints, are very heavy and grievous to be borne.

Thus it is said of the Scribes and Pharisees, that they laid heavy burthens, and grievous to be borne, and laid them upon mens shoulders, Matth. 23. 4. That is, they presse the strict observance of the law upon the people: but (saith Christ) they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. They will not touch them, much lesse will they goe about to lay them on their owne shoulders: false brethren are for the most part exactors of those things, which they themselves most of all neglect. And so in Acts 15. 10. They put a yoke upon the necke of the Disciples, which they nor their fathers were able to beare: and this the Apostle calls a tempting of God; because if they were circumcised according to the law, then they were bound to keep the whole law, as the Apostle testifies in Gal. 5. 3. Now seeing Christ bare the law for his people, it would be a tempting of God,

for:

for they to goe about to undertake it, it being a burthen too heavy for them to beare. Again, the Apostle speaking of false brethren, saith; *As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh* (who pretend to be very zealous and forward) *they* (saith he) *constrain you to be circumcised: only lest they should suffer persecution for the crosse of Christ.* This they did to avoid trouble and persecution, and that thereby they might obtaine the favour of the people, in that they were conformable to the customs of the law; *but neither they themselves who are circumcised* (saith the Apostle) *keep the law:* so that notwithstanding they presse carnall rites and ceremonies upon you: it is not out of any affection or zeale they have to the law, but to get the praise of men, and favour of the people: so saith the Apostle; *they desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh,* Gal. 6. 12, 13. And the Apostle doth reason it out with the *Colossians*, thus: *Wherefore* (saith hee) *if yee be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances,* Col. 2. 20. That is, why are yee burthened or enthralled with the opinions, and with the traditions of men? you do but mancipate and enslave your consciences, in subjecting of them to humane ordinances. This oppression of the Saints is a spirituall bondage, typified by the *Ægyptian bondage*. *Pharaoh's Task-masters* were cruell oppressors of the Jewes: so are all spirituall Task-masters, which would compell the Saints to worke in their Vinyards, and to bear the heat of their indignation and wrarh, which is more then the heate and burthen of the day.

2. In that the Church is called the *Lords vineyard*, and the false Church, and false members are in opposition

ἡ δουλεία.
(*slavery*, signifieth as well enthral-
ling of our
selves to
doctrinall
errors, as
ceremon-
all rites.
Neither is
it meant of
the Jewish
rites, but
the tradi-
tions of
men, as ap-
peareth by
ver. 22, 23.

sition to the Church of Christ, called the *vineyards*.

Observe hence: *The Church is the Lords husbandry*. Thus Christ comparing his Church to a vineyard, calleth himselfe the vine, his members the branches, and his Father the Husbandman. *John 15. 1, 2. I am the vine, and my Father is the husbandman, every branch in me, &c.* By this kind of phrase we are taught, that the Saints are by the Father spiritually ingrafted into Christ, as the branch in the Vine: and by vertue of their implantation in him, they become the trees of righteousness, bearing fruit of holinesse, by the working of his Spirit in their hearts: So the Lord speaks in *Jer. 2. 21. I planted thee a noble vine.* The Lord had taken in the Nation of the Jewes from the world, to make it his Vineyard, on whom he had bestowed many vineyard-mercies, as we may see in *Isa. 5. 1, 2. My beloved (Church of the Jewes) hath a vineyard in a very fruitfull hill (or, in the born of the sonne of oyle) that is, in a rich and fat soile: and he fenced it, or, made a wall about it: He by his power defended them against their enemies, round about; and he gathered out the stones thereof.* As if the Lord had said, I removed those enemies of yours out of the Land, or I gave you meanes to cast out them that offend, out of the congregation: *And planted it with the choicest vine; or Sorek, which is a kind of the best and most laudable vine of all: And I built a tower, and also made a wine presse in it.* A tower for watch-men to look to the Vineyard, to wit, the Prophets, and good Kings: and a Wine-press to presse the grapes of the Vineyard, by which is signified to us the Temple, where they offered up their Sacrifices, the blood of the Sacrifice being powred out, was like the pressing out of the juice of the grape. Thus the Lord

בקר
בזמנך
עץ

Sepivit, ma-
ceria muni-
vit.

Lord fitly resembles his Church to a vineyard : God hath like an excellent Husbandman enclosed a vineyard, and set Christ as the vine, in whom all the Saints are implanted ; and by the shining sun of love, and the flowing forth of his Spirit as water, he makes his pleasant vineyard a fruitfull garden, where he delights to see his own pleasant fruits.

But my owne Vineyard I have not kept.

That vineyard which was given me in trust, and committed to my charge. Hence observe,

That G O D doth intrust his Church with heavenly treasures.

The Church calls it *her vineyard*, because the Lord did intrust her with those heavenly mysteries which shee was made to partake of. Christ saith to his Disciples, *to you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of heaven, but not unto others*, Matth. 13. 11. And saith God, *Shall I hide from Abraham my counsell ?* The Lord doth intrust his people with precious jewels, and with rich treasures, of knowledge and revelation of his grace and spirit : hee puts a large stock into their hands, he lends them talents, he makes them his Stewards of all his Laws and Ordinances : *Hee hath given his law unto Iacob, he hath not dealt so with every nation*, Pl. 147. 20. God had not intrusted any other Nation with his Laws and Ordinances, as he did them.

2. Note ; *That it is a great evill to be negligent in those things wherewith God hath betruſted us.*

This is that of which the Church complains of here, and one of the reasons which shee giveth of her blacknesse, *my owne vineyard I have not kept.* This is verified in him that received a talent, and hid it in the earth, Mat.

25. 18. 28. To be negligent in the Lords trust, is to be like the unjust Steward, spoken of in *Luke 16. 1.* *which wasted his Masters goods* ; but his Lord called him to an account. Now when we shall leave Christ to follow Antichrist, when we leave God for man, when we leave Divine Ordinances for humane Traditions : when we leave the substance of Christ's will, and follow the empty huske of mans fancie : we greatly dishonour God and Christ, we give away Christs honour to man ; we set man in Christs Throne, now there is no greater evill then to lift up the Creature, and depreesse the Creator.

Thirdly, in that the Church brings her neglect as a cause of her blacknesse, Observe.

That the evill of sin is seen in the evill effects that it brings forth. Here we see the evill of neglecting of Gods trust, in the Churches blacknesse. We may see the evill of unfruitfullnesse in *Isa. 5. 2. & 5. 6.* *I looked for Grapes (saith God) and it brought forth wild Grapes :* But what is the effect ? *I will tell you (saith God) what I will doe with my Vineyard, I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up, and I will breake downe the wall thereof, and it shall be troden downe : and I will lay it waste, and it shall not be pruned nor digged, but there shall come up Briars and Thornes : and I will also command the clouds that they raine no raine upon it.* Here is nothing but blacknesse and deformity, and we have a complaint of the Church to this purpose, in *Lam. 1. 18.* *The Lord is righteous, but I have sinned against his Commandement :* but what is the effect ? *Behold, is there any sorrow like to my sorrow ? my Virgins and my young men are gone into captivity.* And in *Verf. 17.* *Zion spreadeth her hands, and there is none to comfort her.* We might read their sin in their

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punish-

punishment; and so God may justly let his people be oppressed by their oppressors, when they first yeild unto them in matters of worship and service.

Lastly, in that the false Church and false members are called a Vineyard, as well as the true Church and members,

Observe,

That those Enemies and false Brethren that afflict the Church, they will come as near the Saints in outward forme and worship, as possible they can. And in this respect the false Church is called a Vineyard, as well as the true. And so they that serve *Baal*, will offer Sacrifice, as well as they that serve the Lord. *Balaam* went to meet the Lord as well as the true Prophets; Antichrist sits in the Temple of the Lord, as well as Christ sits upon his Throne. Hence it is, the Lord reprehended the people of Israel, that they and their Kings had set their thresholds by Gods thresholds, and their Posts by Gods Posts, *Ezek. 43. 8.* As God hath his thresholds, so man hath his thresholds also: and man sets his thresholds by Gods thresholds, that he may take hold of a forme, something like the wayes of God, that so he may shelter himselfe under it, whilst he doth mischief to the Saints.

VERS. 7, 8.

Tell me (O thou whom my soul loveth) where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flocks to rest at Noone: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy Companions.

If thou knowest not (O thou fairest among women) goe thy way forth by the foot-steps of the Flock, and feed thy Kids beside the Shepherds Tents.

THe Church having removed those Objections which might have been made against her, shee now returneth unto her beloved, and makes a third request unto him, for direction in respect of the dispensations of Christ's Kingdome here on Earth, that so shee may no longer be led out of the way by false Brethren, but may be directed in the way of his worship; and that shee may be under Christs government onely, and enjoy his Ordinances, be fill'd more with divine knowledge, and have more power to resist temptations, and the like.

In these two Verses we have,

First, the Churches request unto Christ her beloved.
Verf. 7.

Secondly, Christs answer unto the request of the Church. Verf. 8.

In Verf. 7. we have,

First, the Churches request unto Christ, *Tell me, &c.*

Secondly a reason of her request, *For why should I be as one that turneth aside, &c.*

In the Churches request observe,

First, the amiable and sweet forme of words shee useth, *O thou whom my soul loveth.*

Secondly, the matter it selfe of her request, and this is delivered in two things.

First, her desire to know of Christ the place of his feeding, *Tell me where thou feedest.*

Secondly to know the place of lying downe and rest in the heat of the day, even when the Sun was come to the Meridionall point. *Where thou makest thy flocks to rest at Noone.*

Secondly, we have the reason of the Churches request, and that is by way of interrogation, for the more patheticall expressing.

First, of the worthinesse of her Beloved.

Secondly, of her sincere affection toward him, accounting it an unreasonable thing to depart from him. *I or (saith shee) why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy Companions.*

Tell me (O thou whom my soul loveth) &c.

נִרְאָה
Coram, inde
biphil.

הִנֵּי
Nunciat, dux
indicavit.

נִרְאָה
Antecessor,
antistes, dux
presul, prin-
ceps.

Tell me) or shew, *declare unto me*, the word signifies to declare a thing before hand, so it is used in *Psal. 38. 18. I will declare mine iniquity: David declareth before hand, that he will declare his iniquity. And in Zech. 9. 12. Even to day (saith the Lord) doe I declare that I will render double unto thee.* That is, I doe before declare what I will doe for thee. Also the word signifies to shew or declare very plainly with words and gestures, and with signes of the body, to declare with certainty and most directly. And lastly, it signifies to shew by example, or going before: as a Captaine or Conductor doth declare his mind unto his Souldiers, by going before them, and so shewing of them what they should doe. So the

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sum of the Churches request, is thus much, *Tell me, O thou great Shepheard, where thou feedest thy flock, for I am ignorant of the place where, and the time when thou feedest; direct me, goe before me to the place of feeding, and repast.*

Hence Observe,

First, *That it is no easie thing to find out the way of Christ.* The place is not always easie to be found where Christ walks, for saith Christ, *Many will falsly say, lo here is Christ, or lo there is Christ,* Mark. 12. 21. Sometimes the Church is driven into the Wildernesse, Rev. 12. 14. Sometimes Christ hideth his face, as in Cant. 5. 5. now by reason of all those sad occurrences of the Church, in respect of Persecution, Temptation, Darkenisse, and sometimes the Sun of righteousness withdrawing his light, the Church is far to seek in the things of Christ.

Secondly Observe,

The Church being ignorant her selfe of Christs wayes, doth dilligently and earnestly seeke unto him for direction. Thus weare commanded, *seeke the Lord and his strength, seeke his face continually,* Psal. 105. 4. The Saints are described to be such as seeke after God. *This is the Generation of those that seeke him,* Psal. 24. 6. And let all those that seeke thee rejoyce, Psal. 40. 16. Wicked men are described to be such as *seeke not after God,* Psal. 32. 2. & Psal. 14. 2. And thus Moses tells the people of Israel, Deut. 12. 5. *Unto the place which the Lord your God shall choose out of all your Tribes, to put his name there, even unto his Habitation shall yee seeke, and thither shalt thou come.* They were to seeke the very place that God had chosen, and come thither.

O Thou

O thou whom my soule loveth.

278
Amavit, di-
lexit. Gra-
marici, no-
tant verbum
ahab, d. li-
gendi, esse
ardens &
vehemens,
& significa-
re aliquid
tenerum &
affectione
plenum, ut
fit diligens
justitiam,
qui in ea si-
bi placet &
acquiescit
eam exqui-
rit & perse-
quitur Ri-
verus in Ps
45. 7.

Here we have the amiable, lovely, piercing form of the Churches request, wherein shee expresseth the Character or Print of her souls affection toward her Beloved. The Hebrew word *Ahab*, signifies a vehement and ardent love, so as to pursue and seeke after the thing beloved: So it is used in *Psal. 45. 7. Thou lovest righteousness*: that is, Christ did earnestly pursue and follow after righteousness, and he did, as it were acquiesce, or rest well pleased in righteousness, he did take great delight in it.

My soule.

The soule is put for all the faculties of nature, and for the uniting of all the affections, whereby they goe forth most strongly. Like unto this is the *longing of the soule*, *Gen. 38. 8*. It is called the *kritting of the soule*, *1 Sam. 18. 1*. The *delighting of the soule*, *Isa. 42. 1*. And the *waiting of the soule*, *Psal. 33. 20*. And the *rejoycing of the soule*, *Psal. 35. 9*. So that this periphrasis is of greater force then if shee had said, *O my beloved*. So that by it is meant her unfeigned and ardent love, with a longing desire to enjoy fellowship with Christ. The soule is here by a Synecdoche put for all the Affections of the soule.

Hence Observe,

First, *A Christians love to Christ, it is a collective or united love*. Christians love Christ with their whole soule and strength; with all their affections, and all their affections together. As all the Rivers run into the Sea, and meet in one Ocean: so all a Christians affections (however divided and branched out to other things)

things) meet in Christ, as in a Fountaine. Christ is as the Center and resting place of all the affections of the Saints.

Secondly Observe;

The love of the Saints towards Christ is a hot vehement, and an ardent love The Saints burne in their love towards Christ; all their affections are (as it were) set on fire, by the flames of his love, kindling and enflaming of their hearts. When we bring our hearts to the fire of Christ's love, they must needs wax hot within us. United love must needs be very strong, like unto the Sunbeams when they are contracted and meet in a Burning-glasse, are of great force and strength; such are the affections of the Saints unto Christ.

Where thou feedest, where thou makest thy Flocks to rest at Noone.

Here we have the substance or matter of the Church-Petition: shee desires to know the place,

1. Of feeding.

2. Of lying downe.

Feedest) In the Originall it is, *Where or how thou wilt feed*: That is, where thou art wont continually to feed, thy flocke. The word *Flock* being omitted in the Originall, is supplied, as is usuall in Scripture; as in Gen. 29. 7. *Water ye the Sheep, and goe and feed: that is, feed the flock.*

The word (*Feed*) comprehendeth all the duties of Pastor or Shepheard; as *feeding, guiding, governing, and defending* the flock. Hence it is Kings are said to feed their people, in which respect they have the title of Shepheards, as in Psal. 78. 71, 72. *David was taken by the Lord from the Sheep folds, from following the Ewes great with young, and he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel*

נִדְּבָה
Pascere pas-
cere se pasci,
depascere. Metaphori-
ce, pavit. h. mines, rexit, gubernavit, docuit.

his...

327
In lingua
sancta pro-
prie pastorū
est, aut ovi-
um, ponitur
enim transi-
tivè, & in-
transitivè pro
subjectorum
ratione, in-
transitive,
cum ovibus
attribuitur,
aut homini-
bus seipsos
pascentibus.
Rivecus in
Psa. 23. 1.

his inheritance. Hence it is, Christ is called *the Shepherd of our souls*, 1 Pet. 2. 25.

Therefore it is that the Church desireth to be so guided and directed by Christ to the place of his feeding, that shee might be fed of his heavenly food, and be refreshed by drinking the water of life: shee desireth to know where, or how Christ feeds alone by himselfe, yea, where he feeds *his flock* (opposed to the flocks of his companions) shee desires not onely Christs feeding, and guiding her, but also to feed with his Lambs, with his Sheep, that so shee and they may be mutually refreshed one of another.

Thou makest to rest.

327
Cubare, re-
cubare, suc-
cumbere.
Fortasse in-
de verbum.
Eng. Rab-
bet becaus
it is a crea-
ture much
given to
couch or
lye down.
Est accum-
bere vel ac-
cubare, sicut
solum a-
menta, dum
ruminant
post pastum
Mulcul. in
Psal. 104.
22.

The word (*rest*) in the Originall signifies to lye downe, because we take our rest by lying downe. To desire repast, and to desire rest after repast, it is agreeable to nature, as first to eat, and so to rest after meat: so that after the heavenly Banquet of spirituall dainties, shee may ruminate and chew the cud, as it were, by spirituall meditation, such Beasts as under the Law did chew the cud and part the hoofe were accounted cleane, Lev. 11. 3. So the cleane soule doth ruminate upon the spirituall food by which Christ refresheth it. But the rest here, is meant chiefly of that rest and safety shee desireth of Christ, in respect of persecution and trouble, as appears by the next words.

At Noenc.

This is meant of the heat of the day, the mid-day is called *Zeharajim*, and it is put in the duall number, because it divideth the day into two equall parts, and containeth

raineth a part of the forenoon, and a part of the afternoon; the medium or middle part is a distance or space between both, when the Sun is come to the Meridionall point; by which means it sendeth forth a most scorching and burning heat. Now this must needs be meant of the scorching and burning heat of Persecution, tribulation, and affliction, which is figured out by the heat of the Sun, in *Mat. 13. 6. 21*. This being an unseparable companion with the Gospell, as appears, *Tim. 3. 12*. Shee desires to rest under the shadow of Christ's wings, where shee may enjoy rest and peace, when the Sun of persecution is at the highest, even at noon-day, when the scorching beams thereof, doe cast the greatest heat and extremity.

ערר
Lucere
Vnde.
ערר
Merid es,
quia diem in
duas partes
aquis divi-
dit & gemit
na' acis, ante
meridiana &
vespertinae
medium est
interstitium
& terminus.
Bux. in
Lex.

Now from the matter of the Churches request unto Christ, Observe,

First, *That Christ is a most compleat spirituall Shepheard, feeding, guiding, governing, and directing his flocke.* The Scripture doth often ascribe the title of *Shepheard* unto God, and unto Christ, as in *Psal. 80. 2*. *Heare O Shepheard of Israel.* And Christ is the *Shepheard of our souls*, *1 Pet. 2. 25*. And saith he, *I am the good Shepheard*, *John 10. 11*. Christ hath all the properties of a good Shepheard, and they are such as these.

First, a good Shepheard is carefull to feed his Flock: so is Christ as carefull, and much more then any earthly Shepheard can be to feed his people. *The Lord is my Shepheard or feeder*, saith *David*, and what is the effect? Why saith he, *I shall not want*: he will feed me plentifully and abundantly, so that I shall want nothing. So in *Isa. 40. 11*. *He shall feed his Flock like a Shepheard.* Christ doth excellently feed his flock.

First, Plentifully, with abundance, with the greatest

est variety of all good things: thus the Lord did promise to feed his people in *Ezek. 34. 14. I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high Mountaines of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the Mountaines of Israel.* There is a redundancy and an overflowing good in Christ, so that when he gives any good thing he gives abundance of it; if he give life, peace, joy, or any refreshment, he doth not give a scanty measure of it: but he filleth the empty soule with good things: Christ is both able and willing to doe for us, *far more abundantly then we are able to aske or thinke, Ephes. 3. 20.*

Secondly, Christ doth not onely feed his people with plenty, but also with the choicest food, he doth extract the very quintessence of all good things for them. He makes a feast of *fat things, and the marrow of fatnesse, and Wine on the Lees well refined, Isa. 25. 6.* For such preserveth the strength, and doth most of all refresh nature: So Christs comforts are the best comforts, his joy the best joy, his peace the best peace, his Spirit the best Spirit: Christ doth not feed his people with course diet, but with the best and the most daintiest of heavenly food.

Thirdly, Christ feeds his people with the most suitable food; he feeds them according to their appetites and desires, according to their necessity or need: he hath strong meat for strong men, and milke for Babes, he answereth all our wants, and that with the greatest sufficiency; he is made unto us *Wisdom* in respect of our folly, *righteousnesse* and *sanctification* in respect of our guilt and pollution, *Redemption* in respect of our misery and bondage. Hence it is, *David saith, I shall not want: so long as the Lord is my feeder, I shall not want* any

any thing that is good or suitable for me. As earthly appetites are satisfied with earthly food, so are the heavenly appetites of the Saints filled by Christ of all heavenly food: for of the like nature as the appetite is, must the food be; earthly food will satisfy a naturall appetite, and heavenly food will satisfy the heavenly appetite, and no other: now Christ feeds the heavenly appetites of his Saints with that heavenly *Mannah*, that bread which came downe from heaven; and gives them to drink of the waters of his heavenly Sanctuary, which flows from him, as from the Spring of living waters, feeding and refreshing their spirituall desires and longings, with heavenly food.

Fourthly, Christ feeds his people even to saturation (as I may say) he gives them a full meal of his spirituall dainties; according to this is the charge in *Song 5. 1. Drink abundantly, O my friends*: the more they drink, the more wellcome they are; they may be drunken and never the worse, neither any way distempered by it, but the more they drinke, the more earnest are their desires after it, as being satisfied and yet never satisfied, they are satisfied in the injoyment of it, but they think they never have enough of it. Hence it is that Christ saith in *John 4. 13. Whosoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst more*. That is, he shall never thirst with an inordinate thirst after sin, or earthly things, his lustfull desires are quenched with this spirituall water: but (saith Christ) *The water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water, springing up unto everlasting life*. That is, this spirituall water shall not onely refresh and comfort the weary soule whereby it is satisfied in the presence of Christ, but it shall as the water of the Sanctuary, abound and increase more and more;

it shall increase with all the increasings of God. Thus Christ as an everlasting Spring of living waters, will continually issue out his streams into the hearts of his people, whereby they shall be fed unto the full. Thus Christ as a good Shepherd feeds his flock.

Secondly, Christ (as a good Shepherd) doth rest and refresh his people: hence the Church doth here desire to know the place of his rest, of his lying downe, that so he might not onely feed her, but (as it were) refresh her after meat. Christ doth refresh, and make his people to rest by his presence, by his Spirit, by his promise, and by his power and strength, making them sit securely under his protection. The Prophet David bringeth in this refreshing as a thing which the Lord added to his feeding, *Psal. 23. 5. Thou hast prepared my Table, &c. And thou hast anointed my head with Oile.* That is, thou doest not onely feed me abundantly in supplying me with all good things, but *thou anointest my head with Oile, or thou makest fat my head with Oile,* to wit, by powring it forth upon me: wherein the Prophet alludeth to those hot countries, because it was a use among them to wellcome and cheare their guests with powring out precious sweet Oils upon their heads. And this is that which the Lord promises to his flock, besides the feeding of them, *I will cause them to lye downe,* saith the Lord, *Ezek. 34. 15.* That is, I will refresh and comfort them, I will give them rest and peace, whereby their hearts shall be comforted.

Againe, Christ will not onely cause his people to lye downe and rest, and to take their repast, but he will cause them to lye downe at noon-day: namely, in the greatest heat of persecution. Hence David concludeth, *Though I walke in the valley of the shadow of death.* That

שִׁינָה
Saginaturs,
pinguefa-
ctus fuit

is, though I walke in the midst of temptations and troubles, where is nothing but fears and misery, *Yet* (saith he) *I will feare none ill*, But why? Because *thou with thy Rod and Staffe doest comfort me*. That is, if I goe out of the way, and so fall into great danger, thou wilt sweetly bring me home and secure me. It is otherwise with the hireling. For (saith Christ) *when he seeth the Wolfe comming, he leaveth the sheep and fleeth, and the Wolfe catcheth them, and scattereth them*, John 10. 12. Hirelings and false Shepherds will not stand by their flocks in imminent dangers: but Christ will save and protect his flock in the midst of fears and dangers: and by the rod of his power he will governe, rule, and protect his people in the greatest extremities.

Thirdly, Christ doth lead, guid, and direct his flock, so saith *David*, he like a good Shepherd *leadeth me beside the still waters, or the waters of rest*, Psal. 23. 2. That is, he doth comfortably guideme to those calm waters, such as give rest and refreshing: and in Verf. 3. *He returneth my soule* that was going astray and wandering from him. And *he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness*: he sweetly guideth me in holy paths, but not for any meritt in me, but *for his name sake*. And in Psal. 80. 2. *Thou leadeest Joseph like a flocke*. And the Lord is said to lead his people in the Wildernesse *like a flocke*, by the hand of *Moses* and of *Aaron*, Psal. 77. 20. That is, thou didst lead them through the red Sea, and through the Wildernesse by the hand of *Moses*, even as a Nurse leadeth her Child by the hand, because of it's weakness; so thou leadst them with all tendernes and lenity, with all meeknesse and gentlenesse. And so the word *Lead* in the forenamed place, Psal. 23. 2. signifieth an *ease soft, gentle leading*, with sustaining of infirmity,

נָדַל
In Hiph.
dux: dedux-
it: commode
& enter:
Bux: in
Lex.

as when a Mother leads her Child. Thus *Jacob* is said to drive his Cattle softly least they should over-heat them, *Gen. 33. 14.* Hence we may note

Fourthly, that Christ doth tenderly beare and compassionate his flock, and he doth restore and make up that which is broken or defective. So the Lord saith in *Ezek. 34. 14. I will bind up that which is broken, and strengthen that which is sick.* And so in *Isa. 4. 10.* He will not onely feed his flocke like a Shepherd, but he will gather the Lambs with his armes, and carry them in his bosome. He hath a tender care over them, that those weak Christians, who as Lambs are unable to walke by themselves; he will carry them (as it were) in his bosome, and in his armes, that none of them might be lost or perish. And in that he saith he will carry them in his bosome; he alludeth to the custome of the High-priest under the Law, who was to bear the names of the Children of *Israel* in his Pectorall or Brest-plate upon his heart, which was to figure out unto us, the tender love and pity that Christ bears unto his people, comforting the comfortlesse, restoring such as are out of joynt, so that all is mercy, love and sweetnesse that comes from Christ. Full to this purpose is that in *Isa. 63. 9. In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the Angell of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.* The place may be read interrogatively, thus, *Was he not afflicted? &c.* That is, did he not take to heart the wrongs done to his people in *Egypt*? Was not Christ, the Angell of Gods presence their Saviour and Conductour? Did he not beare them, as a tender Mother doth her young Child? Did he not carry them as the Eagle doth her brood, with such care that shée her selfe may not hurt them, and

and at such a height as others may not reach them to doe them any wrong?

Now in that the Church doth introduce Christ as a Shepheard, and her self as Sheep, it holds forth unto us these Observations.

First, *That those Sheep of Christ are apt to goe astray and wander from Christ.* As Moses, David, Solomon, Peter: all these had their straglings from Christ: So far as we are led by the flesh we are as Sheep going astray. p. 119:10

Secondly, *The Saints desire therefore to be directed by Christ, and are willing to submit themselves to be ordered by him.* It is from Christ the Saints desire to have direction.

First, for that sweet and heavenly food of their souls; for the Saints know there is but one true Shepheard, and therefore they seek after him alone, expecting no whollsome food unlesse it come from Christ.

Secondly, the Saints doe not onely desire the food of Christ, rejecting all the doctrines of men; but also to be refreshed by him in the hottest Persecutions. It was the manner of the Shepheards in those hot Countries to drive their Sheep in the heat of the day unto a place of shaddow where they might lye downe and refresh themselves in the time of the parching heat. So the sum of the Churches desire is, that Christ would refresh and comfort her in the hottest calamities and persecutions, even when Tyrants doe rage, and when all the World is in a flame; that then shee might lie down and refresh her selfe under his shaddow and protection. Hence it is that the Saints rejoyce in tribulations and afflictions, *Rom. 5. 3.* And when they have trouble in the world they have peace in Christ, *John 16. 33.* So that the Church is not solicitous how to shun or avoid trouble, but onely shee desires to flie unto Christ, that he

he may refresh her, and cause her to lye downe in peace, even in the midst of extre. ne dangers.

Thirdly, the Saints desire not onely to be fed and to be refreshed by Christ; but also to rest and feed with the flock of Christ. So the Church here desires to know where Christ feedeth, and where he maketh his flock to rest. Saints desire to feed with Saints, and to lie down with Saints, and to have communion onely with Saints, they desire that the precious may be seperated from the vile, *Jer. 5. 19.* and that their feeding may not be with ravenous VVolves and Tigers, but with the harmlesse, innocent, and peaceable Lambs of Christ.

Fourthly, the Saints desire such food & such refreshing as is heavenly and divine; they looke above the creature, and above themselves, and depend upon Christ for heavenly food, and for spirituall rest, knowing that nothing can secure them but a divine protection: all the shelters and p^{ro}ps that the creature can afford us are but like *Jonah's Gowrd*, or some such poor shaddow, that cannot shelter us in a fiery storme of persecution. VVe may obtaine rest and quietnesse under Christs shaddow in evill times, but not under any shaddows of our owne.

Now followeth the Churches Reason.

*Why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks
of thy Companions.*

VVe have her reason by way of interrogation, for the more patheticall expressing,

First, Of her Beloveds deserts and worthinesse, as if she should have said; VVhy should I turne aside from such a Heavenly and gracious Shepheard, and turne to VVolves and Tigers? VVhy should I leave heavenly
doctrines

doctrines for humane traditions : Why should I leave him by whom I have been refreshed and comforted, to follow strangers whom I know not? VVhy should I turne aside to honour the creature and neglect the Creator?

Secondly, shee expresseth her owne sincerity of affection towards Christ, and so the frame of her words must run thus: why should I wander through ignorance and blindness from thee whom I love and delight to honour, and to follow after those that are enemies to thee? Why should I honour them by dishonouring of thee? VVhy should I serve whom I would not, and neglect thee whom I desire to serve. And thus the Church expresseth how worthy Christ is to be honoured, and how sincere her affections are towards him, desiring to honour him onely.

Why should I be like, &c.

It may be well Translated, *Why should I be as one that pitcheth or spreadeth his Tent by the flocks of thy Companions.* For the word that is here Translated (*Turne aside*) signifies to put on Garments or to cover ones selfe, as it were: so they covered their Tents, and they were as a hiding place unto them that used to sojourne in them. Junius renders it thus, *For why should I be as spreading of Tents with the flocks of thy Companions.* That is, I would not be conversant with them that are false Shepherds, or take up my abode with those who presume to joine themselves with Christ in rule and authority.

Or this covering may be with a Vaile, and so the Greeks use to render the signification of the Hebrew word; and so it may signifie, either,

First, her sorrow and grieve, as Mourners use to co-

כסו
Obvelavit.
operuit. in-
dign, abscon-
dit, gl'me-
tavit, cur
enim essem
quasi exten-
dens tenio-
rium apud
greges socio-
rum tuarum
Junius.

Quasi oper-
ta siue vel-
lata. Boxt.
in Lex.

ver their faces, *Ezek. 24. 17.* where it is said, *Forbear to cry, and bind the tire of thine head upon thee.* That is, shew no signe of mourning at all; towit, by going bare-headed, *Levit. 10. 6.* or by going bare-footed, *2 Sam. 15. 30.* or covering of the face, *Levit. 13. 45.* for all these were signes of sorrow and mourning: or,

Thirdly, her unchastity and dishonesty, as *Thamar* was taken for an Harlot, because she had covered her selfe, *Gen. 38. 14. 5.* having put off her widdows Garments, or those Garments which were signes of gravity, or mourning; she veiled her selfe, as one that would cover her lightnesse and unchastity. Now according to this Interpretation the sence may run thus, Why should I be as one that covereth her selfe, as one that is light and unchast, and that followeth strangers, as Harlots use to doe? why should I be as one that shamefully leaveth her Husband, to follow after Strangers? or why should I be as one that must cover my selfe with shaddows and pretences, pretending to be for Christ, and yet turne aside to his Companions.

Or lastly, why should I be as one that turneth aside, that is, into false ways, to be seduced by false Teachers, and such as would lead me out of the way; of such the Apostle speaks off in *Gal. 1. 5, 6.* *I marvel (saith he) that you are so soone removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ, unto another Gospell, which (saith he) is not another, but there are some that trouble you, and would pervert the Gospell of Christ.* Here the Apostle useth the present Tense, *pervertitis*, to intimate thus much, that they were not already moved, but were in danger of being removed by false Apostles and Teachers. So according to this Interpretation the sence runs thus, why should I be as one that is seduced and misled by false

Shepheards

Shepherds and Pastors, seing thou art my pastor or Shepheard, what a dishonour is it that I should be lead and directed by them that will lead me out of the right way, and make me follow their flocks?

By the flocks of thy Companions.

The word *Gueder* here Translated *Flocke*, signifieth both an *Herd* and a *Flocke*, Joel 1. 18. And the word signifieth to *order*, *dispose*, or *instruct* Souldiers in military discipline, to put them orderly in Rank and File, in Battaille array, or in an orderly posture, so the word is used in 1 Chron. 12. 38. so that it is meant here of those flocks or companions that are led and ordered by false Teachers that are instructed of them, even as Souldiers are taught by their Commanders.

Of thy companions.

The word Translated *Companions* signifies to *consociate* or to conjoyne ones selfe to another. So the false Prophets, Apostles, and Teachers did conjoine themselves to Christ, they put themselves as it were, in equall authority with him, to command, to governe, and to direct their flocks, even as Christ did his. The Hebrew word *Chober* of *Chabar*, is Translated a Charmer, Deut. 18. 11. because by sorcery they associate themselves with the Devill, and have communion with familiar spirits. So here, false Teachers they associate themselves with Christ, they will be, as it were copartners with Christ, in matter of government and authority: if Christ command the Conscience, so will they, if Christ make Laws, they will doe the same; and so they are not unfitly called Christs companions, not because of their dignity, but of usurpation.

ררר
Ordinavit,
disposuit, in-
struxit, scil.
aciem mili-
tarem. Bux
in Lex.
Unde ver-
bum. ררר
Grex, be-
cause the
flock or
herd is
ordered &
disposd of
by the
Shepheard
or Herdier
ררר
consociatus
tun
Unde no-
men ררר
consors, so-
cietas.

Now if we take this *turning aside*, for her covering or hiding of her selfe.

Hence Observe,

First, *That to leave Christ, and to follow Strangers in matters of divine worship is shamefull Idolatry.* Therefore it is that the Lord saith, he will make the *wickednesse of the whoredomes of Judah to be discovered*, Ezek. 23. 29. That is, as if the Lord had said, I will unveile and discover thy nakednesse, towit, thy shamefull forsaking of God to serve Idolls.

Secondly, if we take the covering for pitching of her Tent, with seducers and false sheep: Observe, *That true Christians have great care and circumspection, that they joine not themselves unto false Teachers.* The faithfull desire to worship God aright, in spirit and in truth, John 4. and therefore dare not joine themselves with Idolaters or false Christs, such as seek to betray their souls.

Thirdly, if we take her turning aside into danger: Observe, *That it is a very dangerous thing to follow false Teachers, or to joine with false Congregations.* They are such as come under coverings and false pretexts, and Christ tells us, that they are rending wolves in sheeps cloathing, Mat. 7. 15. they have an externall habite of simplicity and humility, but inwardly they teare and devour.

Fourthly, from the title given to those false Teachers: Observe, *That false Teachers are Usurpers of Christ's prerogative.* Hence they are called his companions and fellows, because they share with Christ in his Government and Lordship, not by his appointment, but by usurpation: neither are they companions indeed, for they are not called so in respect of any dignity or honour that belongs unto them, but rather to give us to
take

take notice, what proud insolent usurpers they be, who thus joine themselves with Christ in point of Government, for Christ alone is *Caput ecclesie*, the chiefe head and Shepherd of his Church, the onely Teacher sent from God: he reserves the headship and royalty over his people as peculiar to himselfe; he alone carries the Government upon his owne shoulders, *Isa. 9. 6.* he alone hath soveraigne power and authority in ruling over his Church: he alone hath the supremacy of Government, and is Commander in chiefe, as I may say: he alone can command, forbid, permit, reward, punish, doe justice, and repress all disorder, which authority he hath as Mediator received from his Father: he is the great Monarch and King over his Church; and there is not any that hath such soveraignty and rule besides him. Now hence it is, that all such as set up a devised worship and doctrine of their owne, that undertake to make and establish Laws to rule and sway the Conscience: such I say, advance themselves, even to be Christs companions, such a companion is the Pope, for one of the chiefe of all *Babylon's* Merchandize are *the souls of men*, *Rev. 18. 13.* by her inventions shee hath made Merchandize of the souls, and domineer'd over, the Consciences of men. Episcopacy in all places hath trodden in the same path, and so all men whatsoever, that shall frame a Religion of their owne, and impose it on the Consciences of men, they doe joine themselves in equall authority with Christ. There are many usurpations in this kind, but never tollerated by Christ: neither is there any in the world that can command the Conscience in matters meerly divine besides him.

Verf. 8, *If thou know not* (O thou fairest among women) *goe thy way forth by the footsteps of the flocks, and feed thy Kids beside the Shepherds Tents.*

In these words we have Christs answer unto his Spouse, wherein is contained his ready offering himselfe to imbrace, comfort, and instruct her. In the former part of the Chapter we had the Bride seeking after her wel-Beloved: now in the second part we shall hear what answer Christ makes unto her.

In Christ's answer observe.

First, his supposition, *If thou know not*, or his assumption, *forasmuch as, or seeing thou knowest not.*

Secondly, his compellation, or sweet forme and manner of Speech, *O thou fairest among women.*

Thirdly, his direction unto her, and that is two fold, Christ directeth her,

First, where she should walke, *Go thy way forth by the footsteps of thy flocks.*

Secondly, where she should feed, *And feed thy Kids beside the Shepherds Tents.*

If thou knowest not, &c.

These words are Translated by way of supposition, as appears by the particule (*If*) in the entrance of them; but I think they are not simply conditionall, for then Christ would seem to reprove or check his Spouse for her ignorance, which I can scarce think to be so. But rather I take the words to be an assumption of Christ, taking the Church at her word, for in the former Verse shee pleaded ignorance, and herein this Verse Christ doth grant the truth of what she said: and so the words

ON
Si, siquid-
dum, siquan-
do, & in-
terrogative,
anum, An?

words may run thus, *Forasmuch as, or seeing that thou knowest not.* As in Numb. 22. 20. *If the men be come to call thee: that is, forasmuch as they are come.* The words are more full in the Originall, then they are in the Translation; and they run thus, *Forasmuch as thou knowest not for thy selfe, or to thy selfe.* Wherein there is a pleonasm, or fullnesse of Speech, the more aptly to signifie the ignorance which the Church had in her selfe, upon acknowledgment whereof, Christ doth direct her what to doe in the case.

Or the words may imply the forme of a Reason, *Because thou knowest not, &c.* Christ doth undertake to direct her, because she is ignorant, and cannot find out the true way of worship without his help.

sed pro particula rationali, ut aliquando apud Latinos si pro quia accipitur. Rivet. in Gen. 28, 20.

Quando quidem ignoras. So Junius renders it.

Particula in (si) pro simplici conditionalis hic accipi non debet,

Knowest not.

The word in the Originall signifies properly the knowledge of the mind, and of the understanding; so it is taken in 1 Chron. 12. 32. *And the men that had understanding of the times.* That is, the men that can readily observe the times, that can understand when matters of moment were fittest to be done. And it is applied to them that are *Skillfull in all wisdome*, Dan. 1. 4. That is, of a ready understanding: also the word noteth to *know* with respect and affection, as in Exod. 1. 8. *There arose a King that knew not Joseph.* That is, that did not respect or love Joseph. And in Hos. 2. 8. *For shee did not know that he gave her Corne and Wine, &c.* That is, she did not regard or take notice, that I gave her Corne, &c.

וידע
Scivit, novit, cognovit, animadvertit, intellexit, sensit, probavit, approbavit, curavit, amavit, beneficiavit.
Proprie mentis est et intellexit. Buxto in Lex.

Againe, it notes regard or care, as in Prov. 12. 10. *A righteous man regardeth the life of his Beast.* That is, he doth regard and care for the Beast that doth him service.

vice.

vice. Lastly, the word imports a knowledge with approbation and good liking: so it is used in *Psal. 1. 6. The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous.* That is, he so knows it, as to approve and like of it: So then, the words import thus much, as if Christ should answer thus: *Forasmuch as, or because thou knowest not to thy selfe, being altogether unable to direct thy selfe: and whereas thou knowest not with a good understanding, nor with that affection care and approbation as thou oughtest to have done, therefore get thee forth, &c.*

Hence Observe,

First, That the faithfull Servants and Saints of Christ walke in much blindness and ignorance. Hence it was the Church called unto Messiah for direction in the former Verse, and here Christ doth assume and take up her words by way of grant, *Seing thou knowest not, &c.* Shee had been drawne aside by false Prophets, and by false Brethren, who had challenged to themselves the name of true Prophets, and true Churches, by which meanes the Saints and true Sheep of Christ, had been very much darkned in their knowledge and understanding, that they did not know which way to turne themselves, being always in danger of joyning themselves to false Churches, namely, to the Hocks of Christ's companions. This ignorance of the Saints is demonstrated, in that the Lord appointed a peculiar Sacrifice for the ignorance of the Priests, of the Magistrates, and of the People; *Levit. 4.* The word *Shegagab*, there used for Ignorance, signifies to goe astray, or to erre out of the right way, through ignorance or forgetfullnesse, unadvisedly to be drawne away and deceived. Hence it is that the Apostle calleth such sins in *Heb. 9. 7. ἀγνομάτων* Errors. done of ignorance: so the word signifieth any sin which proceedeth

שגג

Erravit, a.

berravit, o.

berravit.

Αγνομα.

Erratum.

ceedeth from ignorance and errour. So that these errors or ignorances were such sins as did flow from the error of the mind, or of the affections, when the mind, judgement, will, and affections are led aside, through negligence or want of care, not thinking of the heyniounesse of the sin before it be committed: such was the Churches sin here, shee wandered from Christ through the ignorance of her understanding, or unawares and unwittingly, before she was aware, shee was drawne aside from her Beloved to turne aside with his companions. Hence the Apostle saith, such are to be *restored with the spirit of meeknesse*, Gal. 6. 1. Observe the Apostles expression, *If any be overtaken with a fault*. The word in the Originall signifies to be taken before he is aware, as one that is surprized or set upon on a suddain. Besides this, we have the Apostles testimony, wherein he telleth us, that we *see but through a glasse darkely, or in a riddle*, 1 Cor. 13. 12. That is, the greatest sight we have of Christ here, at the best it is but a dark, and ænigmaticall sight; and saith he, *we know but in part*: our knowledge is imperfect as well as our sight. Thus Agur complaineth of himselfe, saying, *Surely I am more brutish then any man, and have not the understanding of a man; I never learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy*, Prov. 30. 2, 3. That is, I am more foolish then an ordinary man, I have not obtained to any great knowledge of holy and heavenly things. And the Apostle labours to take men from all self-confidence in this respect. *And if any man* (saith he) *thinketh that he knows any thing, he knoweth nothing yet, as he ought to know*, 1 Cor. 8. 2. That is, he that hath an opinion that his knowledge is perfect, knows nothing at all. But Christ doth not upbraid the Church with her ignorance, but

απολαμ
βαιν.
Occupo, præ-
occupo.

is ready to imbrace and instruct her. Hence Observe,

Secondly, *That Christ takes not advantage from the sins, or from the ignorance of his people to upbraide them, but doth rather help them against their infirmities.* The Church had many deformities and failings, shee had observed mens traditions, and neglected those things which Christ had given her in trust, shee was ignorant of the wayes of Christ, and yet Christ deals very tenderly and sweetly with her, *Seing thou knowest not, &c.* Christ is so far from casting off his people for weaknesse, that he delights in helping and sustaining his people under their infirmities. *When I am weake then I am strong,* saith the Apostle. And Christ himself hath commanded us, *that we receive him that is weake in the faith,* & not to cast him off from our fellowship and society; surely then he will not cast off his people for their weaknesse and ignorance, neither will he any way neglect them for some failings. Christ doth beare with the infirmities of his people, in relation to his Office of Priest-hood; so saith the Author to the Hebrews, Chap. 2. 17, 18. *Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren; that he might be a mercifull and faithfull High-priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people: for in that he himselfe hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that be tempted.* That is, Christ was like to his Brethren in all things, sin excepted, to the end he might be a faithfull High-priest; never to neglect his people at any time, but in all their slips and oversights to shew them mercy: and hence it is, he hath taken our weaknesse upon him, as a pledge, to testifie and assure us, that he will both pity and help us. Now in that the Apostle saith, *He being tempted, is able to succour them that are tempted:* He doth not mean, that

that Christ received any ability by his temptations; but he would assure us thereby, that Christ is willing to succour us under temptation, as one that hath undergone temptations himselfe.

Now the truth of this appears yet more in the following words, wherein we have a sweet compellation, or ravishing forme of words.

O thou fairest among women.

Christ doth here commend the excellent and surpassing beauty of his Church, notwithstanding all her deformities and blacknesse spoken of before. She was deformed and black in the eyes of the world, and also in her owne apprehension, but faire and beautifull in Christ's eye; and shee was not onely of some meane or ordinary beauty, but the fairest among women.

The Hebrew *Japhet*, faire, signifies faire or beautifull, not onely in respect of colour and complexion, but also in a just symmetry or proportion of parts: for both fairnesse of complexion, and proportion of members, makes the most compleat beauty. The word doth also import such a beauty as attracteth love, and draweth approbation or good liking. Sometimes the word is used in a double forme, to increase the signification of it; and then it signifies the most transcendent and very excellent beauty: so it is used concerning Christ, *Thou art fairer then the Children of men*, Psal. 45. 2. That is, thou art much fairer then all the Sons of *Adam*: this fairnesse is not onely meant of the body, but of the mind and of the understanding: such beauty is called, *The beauty of wisdom*, Ezek. 28. 7. This beauty consisteth in wisdom and holinesse, it is the beauty of all spirituall graces of the Saints, as faith, love, patience, hu-

יפה
Pulchrum
esse, venu-
stus, deco-
rus fuit.

יְפִיָּה
Pla. 45. 3.

mility, &c. it is not an outward beauty of the body, but an inward beauty of the soule.

The word importeth (as I hinted before) such beauty as attracteth love and approbation ; for the same word is attributed sometime to Cattell, *Genes.* 41. 2. Sometime to Trees, *Jer.* 11. 16. And to all the works of Gods hands, *Eccles.* 2. 11. So that it is applied to such things as doth draw and win the affections of man : yet Christ addeth to this beauty by saying,

The fairest among women.

The most comely beauty is usually set forth by women, as strength and valour is set forth by men ; and when he saith, *Faire among women*, he meaneth more faire then other women, or, the fairest of woman-kind : thus *Mary* the Mother of Christ is called, *Blessed among women*, *Luke* 1. 28. That is, more blessed then other women : so the *Lion* is said to be *strong among Beasts*, *Prov.* 30. 30. That is, the strongest among Beasts. Now the meaning must needs be thus, that the Church is far more excelling in all spirituall beauty, beyond all earthly and temporall beauty, however shee seemeth black in her owne eyes (as all the Saints are privy to their own deformities) and however others doe contemne her, esteeming her to be void of beauty, yet unto Christ shee seemeth to be most faire. There are many in the world that have a shew of externall beauty, and are adorned with many externall Ornaments : but their beauty in the eyes of *Messiah*, is nothing comparable to the beauty of the Saints, who indeed are base and contemptible to carnall view ; but yet by their spirituall beauty and Ornaments they excell them all ; Hence it is Christ calleth the Church *the fairest among women*.

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Now from this insinuating sweet compellation of Christ to his Church, Observe,

First, *That Christs doth win the affections of his Saints, by sweet insinuations.* He doth (as it were) insinuate and get into our affections before we are aware. Hence it is, that he useth such sweet termes of relation to his people; as *Love, Dove, undefiled, Spouse, Brethren, Children, Friends, Sonnes,* and thelike: all to insinuate and get within their hearts, and that for these ends.

First, to assure them of his good will, love, delight, and acceptation. *I call you no more Servants, but friends,* (saith he) *Because that I receive from the Father, I declare it unto you,* John 15. 15. That is, you are my friends, and I deale with you as a friend, and by this you may take notice of my love and friendship towards you, because I reveale unto you the mind of my Father.

Secondly, to cause them to take notice of his grace and love: ¶ The Saints of Christ are often complaining of blacknesse and deformity, but seldome acknowledging their beauty and fairnesse: they can often see their meannesse but not their riches, their weaknesse, but not their strength; their sins, but not their graces. The Church here had called her selfe black, but Christ calleth her faire: shee was something blackish in her owne eyes, but exceeding faire in Christ's eyes. Now that the Church might apprehend her owne beauty, as well as her deformity, and that shee might see her selfe faire in Christ, as well as black in her selfe; he useth this insinuating sweet forme of Speech, *O thou fairest among women.*

Secondly Observe, *That the Church is exceeding faire and beautifull in Christ's eyes.* The false Church is compared to a woman, Revel. 17. But an Harlot, drunken
and

and beastly. and the severall parts thereof to *Abolab*, and *Abolibah*, Ezek. 23. whose Breasts are pressed, and the Teats of whose Virginity are bruised: but the Spouse of Christ is beautifull, for whom he gave himselfe, *That he might sanctifie it and cleanse it by the washing of water, through the word: that he might make it unto himselfe a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and blamelesse*, Ephes. 5. 25, 26, 27. And saith the Apostle, *The blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin*, 1 John 1. 7. And to this purpose see how the Church is compared in *Revel. 12. 1.* to a *Woman clothed with the Sun, and the Moone under her feet, and upon her head a Crowne of Twelve Starrs*. The Church is resembled to a woman for her beauty, *cloathed with the Sun*, the brightest and most glorious Creature in the World, darting forth it's glorious beams into all parts: such is the glory of her life and conversation, such is the beauty of all her graces, such is the brightnesse of her heavenly doctrines, and as for Jewish rites and ceremonies, and all worldly glory, which are mutable, like the *Moone*, shee doth tread them under her feet, as things far beneath her: and for her Ornament or Crowne, shee hath *Twelve Starrs upon her head*; and as for Crownes of gold, and all worldly dignity, shee treadeth as dung under her feet: having the Stars, towit, those severall lights which Christ hath set up in her, as so many precious stones set in the circumference of a Crowne, for so many lights or glorious dispensations, given her of Christ, to be glorious Ornaments about her head. Well then might Christ say unto her, *Behold thou art faire my love, Behold thou art faire*. And *O thou fairest among women*.

But now we must take notice of two things.

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First, that this beauty is not naturall, neither doe we receive it from nature: for so we are shewed by the Prophet, *Ezek. 16.* by nature we are uncleane and loathsome, our *Nativity* was of the Land of *Canaan*, of *Amorites*, and *Hittites*, *Verf. 3.* And we were cast out, as being loathed in the day of our birth, *Verf. 5.* polluted in our blood, *Verf. 6.* but,

Secondly, it is a supernaturall beauty: Hence the Apostle exhorts us, to put on the new man, *Ephes. 4. 24.* He useth the metaphor of putting on, to shew unto us, that those graces of the new man are as so many vnuist and beautifull Ornaments to our souls. Thus the Lord put excellent Ornaments upon his Church, *Ezek. 16. 7.* and covered her nakednesse, *Verf. 8.* washed away her blood, *Verf. 9.* decked and adorned her with Chaines and Jewells, &c. and so shee came to be exceeding beautifull in his eyes, *Verf. 10. 13.* The Church shines in the bright beams of Christ's excellency, her beauty is a derivative beauty, which flows on her from the Fountain of beauty; as the members shine in the glory of their head, and as the wife shines in the glory of her Husband; so Christians shine in the glory of Christ.

Thirdly Observe, That the Saints are most faire in Christ's eyes, when they are most deformed in their owne. The Church as being privy to her owne deformities, calleth her selfe black, *Verf. 5.* but here Christ calleth her fair, yea, the fairest among women: and in *Verf. 15.* he magnifieth her beauty. The Church is never more faire then when shee judgeth her selfe to be most deformed; never more happy then when shee accounteth her selfe most miserable; never more holy then when shee reckons her selfe most of all polluted: shee is never richer then when shee sees her selfe to be poorest of all: for the

the sence of misery, poverty, deformity and weaknesse is the *Primum mobile*, the first mover, as it were, that causeth us to looke for help from another; when we are sensible of evill, then we run to the fountaine of good: so saith the Apostle, *When I am weake then am I strong*, 2 Cor. 12. 10. That is, when I am weake in my selfe, I am strong in Christ, and when I am weake in the flesh I am strong in the Spirit. And in Vers. 9. *His strength is made perfect in weaknesse*. The Apostle doth not meane in thus speaking, that the strength or vertue of God can be either increased or diminished; but then it is said to be perfect, when it manifesteth it selfe to the full, and demonstrateth that nothing can overcome or conquer it: the greater the infirmities of the Saints are, and the greater their assaults and temptations are, the greater and stronger doth that power and vertue appear to be, that supporteth them under such infirmities and temptations: So that when our weaknesse doth most appeare, the perfection of Gods strength is most seene. Thus it is Christ doth not esteeme of his people more at one time then at another, but onely the difference is in the making out of his love to us; and there is never so much of the beauty of Christ seene in us, as then, when we see our selves most deformed.

Now from this sweet compellation, and most amiable forme of Speech, *O thou fairest among women*, Christ proceedeth to give his Church direction.

First, in the way where shee should goe.

Secondly, where shee should feed.

Goe thy way forth by the footsteps of the Flocke, and feed thy Kids beside the Shepherds Tents.

Goe thy way forth, &c.

In the Originall it is, *Goe forth for thee, or, Goe forth for thy selfe.* So the Lord said unto Abraham, *Goe thou forth of thy Country, or, Goe forth for thy selfe,* Genes. 12. 1. That is, up and be going, and I will goe along with thee. And thus we are commanded to *goe forth and meet the Bridegroom,* Mat. 25. 6.

The Hebrew word *Goe forth* is applied to diverse things: as going from place to place, Genes. 8. 7. to going forth of the womb, Genes. 15. 4. to the rising of the Sun, Genes. 19. to the going forth of the word of God, Genes. 24. 50. It signifies an *hasty going forth*, as in Exod. 12. 31. *Arise and get you forth*, saith God to Moses and Aaron; that is, make hast and stay not, but goe speedily and serve the Lord. And in Genes. 19. 14. Lot advised his Sons to *arise and be gone*, that is, hastily, with all speed. So that we may take the meaning of the words thus: *Goe forth*, abide no longer under false Shepherds, sit not still under their Government, bestir and put forth thy selfe to know what I have given thee in trust, forsake false Teachers and Brethren, and follow the steps of those that have been faithfull unto me. Christ willeth his Church to come away from those flocks of his Companions, and not to walke in their ways: for though they pretend to worship Christ, yet they observe nothing but mens Traditions.

By the footsteps of the flocke.

If thou wilt find me where I doe feed my sheep, that thou mayest joine with them, and not follow strangers; *Goe forth by the footsteps of the flocke.* The word here Translated *footsteps* signifies the end of a thing, as in Psa.

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Exiit, pro-
diit, proces-
sit, egressus
fuit.

יָצָא
Go out,
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word hath
in it a prick
extraordi-
nary,
which in-
creaseth
the signifi-
cation, as
an hasty
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APV

Calc. calca-

rag. exre-

num pedis

male latest,

finis, exre-

ma pars.

Kimchi ad-

dit. merces,

quia exre-

taum laboris

et. Bux.

in Lex.

Vox

APV

proprie sig-

nificat: ca-

cein, calca-

neum, plan-

tam pedis

sem, vestigi-

um, et qui-

a plantavul-

umaeft pars

corporis hu-

mani, ideo

per meta-

phor. significat omne illud, quod finem vel operis alicujus, vel studij perinde atque fructus quidam consequi-

tur, sive id studio queratur, sive non queritur imò etiam si operans nolit ut sequatur. Moller, in Psal.

119, 33. Sic τέλος finis apud grecos pro fructu et emolumento quod ex re quacumq; capitur usurpant.

Legh. in Cr. 5, Sac.

119. 33. *I will keep thy Commandments unto the end.* Hence also it signifies reward, because reward is given at the end, *Psal. 112. In keeping of thy Commandments there is great reward.* Reward is the end of obedience, but properly it signifies the *heel* or *footstole*, and sometimes the *footstep* or *print of the feet*, because the footstole or heel is the utmost part of the body. Now by footsteps are meant the print of the feet, or the way trodden out before us; so we are told by the Apostle, *That because Christ hath suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps who spake no sin, &c. 1 Pet. 2, 21, 22.* So that to follow Christs steps, is to take him for an example; it is a borrowed kind of Speech taken from Painters, that draw out the forme or fashion of a thing; or a School-master that writes a copy for an example to his Schollar: Such a forme and patterne hath Christ given to his Servants, wherein they are to follow his footsteps.

Of the Flocke.

Some read it, *Of the flocks*; and indeed the word *Ison* lacketh the Plurall number in forme of declension, but not in sense and signification: so that it may be taken either Singularly or Plurally, according as the words will beare. But I rather here take it in the singular number, because Christ doth oppose his owne, onely flock, unto the flocks of his companions: as he himself being that onely great Shepheard, is opposed to his companions, and generally Christ hath one flock and one

one fold, *John 10. 16.* And he calleth his Church *his flock,* and the flock of his pasture, *Ezek. 34. 22, 23.* And in Song 6. 9. *My Dove* (saith Christ) *and my undefiled is but one.*

Now the flock being the Saints whom we must follow, their footsteps are their faith and obedience; for so we are taught to *walke in the footsteps of the faith of our father Abraham,* Rom. 4. 12. And so of all the godly that went before us: the Author to the Hebrews saith, *That by faith the Elders obtained a good report,* Heb. 11. 2. That is, they left a good report or example behind them. And in Chap. 12. 1. he calleth them *a cloud of Witnesses:* by which expression the Apostle seems to allude to that cloud whereby the Children of Israel were led and directed withall, *Exod. 13. 21.* So that as that cloud guided the Children of Israel from *Ægypt* to *Canaan,* so this cloud of witnesses, to wit, that multitude of the faithfull that went before us, may direct us, as by their example, in the holy and spirituall wayes of Jesus Christ. And thus the Apostle expostulates with the *Corinthians,* and saith, *Walked we not in the same Spirit, walked we not in the same steps:* to wit, that *Titus* did, 2 Cor. 12. 18. So that to walke in the same steps with the Saints, is to walke in the same faith, in the same Spirit, in the same obedience with them.

Now by a little recapitulation you may take the words yet a little more fully thus: *Goe forth for thy selfe, or get thee forth:* That is, from thy blacknesse and superstition, get thee out of thy selfe, out of the world, out of thy former course, put thy selfe forward, set not up thy rest here, but up and be doing; be not alwayes to seek, but, *goe forth by the footsteps of the flocke,* in the footsteps of former Christians, *Abraham, Moses, and David,* and of all

the Prophets and Apostles. Now as for these latter times, they are Apostate times wherein Antichrist hath darkened the whole Earth: but look to evangelicall times, and walke as *John, Peter, and Paul*, and the rest of the holy men of God did in their times. Christ proceedeth to a second direction.

And feed thy Kids beside the Shepheards Tents.

Kids) are young Goats, which sometime signifie the wicked, as being opposed to the sheep of Christ, *Matth.* 25. 32. yet notwithstanding Kids were offered up in Sacrifice in the Law, and so prefigured Christians offered up as a living Sacrifice to God: And Christ himselfe was figured out by Goats and Kids, *Heb.* 9. 12. And the people of Israel were to offer a Lamb without blemish, *from the sheep or from the Goats*, *Exod.* 12. 5. So that the flocks in Scripture did comprehend both *Sheep* and *Goats*, for so the Hebrew word *Gedi* signifies: So we may take it of any young ones of the flock.

By these Kids here we may understand them of young Christians, such as are tender and not able to shift for themselves: these Christ would have to be nourished and fed, not with humane doctrine, but with *the sincere milke of the word*, *1 Pet.* 2. 2. And thus Christ commandeth *Peter* to feed not onely his sheep, but his young and tender Lambs, *John* 21. 15, 16. So that Christ would have the Church take care of young Saints, that they might not want food, but that they might find pasture for them.

Beside the Shepheards Tents.

The word *Gual* Translated *beside*, signifies sometimes against, sometimes neere, sometimes oppositively, sometimes

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Inde.

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Hadus caprum & ovium.
Schind, in Pentaglot.

times *with*, and sometimes *above*, which causeth diverse Interpretations.

First, *Beside the Tents or Tabernacles of the Shepherds*. By which Shepherds we may understand such as are called Christs *Companions*, Verf. 7. And then we must read, *Above the Tents*: that is, thou shalt feed thy Kids with more divine and heavenly food then those false Shepherds can give: thou shalt not feed them with humane doctrine, and with the fancies of men, but with that food that comes downe from Heaven, with solid and everlasting food: or,

Secondly, we may understand these to be the true Shepherds of Jesus Christ, which of old fed the flock of God, as many Scriptures testifie. *Psal. 77. 21. Thou leddest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and of Aaron..* That is, *Moses and Aaron* did guide, direct, feed instruct, and teach thy people, as a Shepherd doth his flock. And the Apostle exhorts the Hebrews *To remember them that had the rule over them*: or as it is in the Originall, *As are the guides unto you*; such as the Lord had filled by his Spirit, with understanding, were as guides and Shepherds to weaker Christians. Now if we understand the words according to this Interpretation, then we must read them thus, *Feed thy Kids with, or near the Shepherds Tents*: that is, bring thy young and weak Christians to those that are the Shepherds of Jesus Christ, whom the Lord hath indued with spiri-
tuall wisdom and understanding, to feed, guide, and direct them. We may take the words in either of these senses, for they both hold forth one and the same thing, to wit, that the Lambs of Christ, the members of his Church, should not be fed with husks and Hogs-meat, of the inventions of mans braine, and with the supersti-
tious

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ηγεμενων
αυτων.
Heb. 13. 7

stitious ceremonies of false Churches, but with the pure and wholesome food of Christ's word and doctrine, and with Ordinances and Laws of the King of *Sion*; they should be fed, guided, preserved, and governed by Christ alone. The words being thus explained, let us gather some Observations from them.

Goe forth, &c.

First, in that Christ directeth his Church to goe forth from her blacknesse, ignorance, and superstition. Hence Observe,

That Christians are not to sit downe under, but to arise and depart from sin, ignorance, and superstition. First, they are to goe out of former evils of blacknesse and ignorance unto purity and saving knowledge: Thus did *Paul* at his Conversion, turne from persecuting the Church of Christ, and fell to preach Christ. And thus the Apostle exhorts the whole Church, *To lift up the hands which hang downe, and the feeble knees, and make strait paths for their feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, but let it rather be healed*, Heb. 12. 12, 13. That is, they ought not to yield and give over because of the sharpnesse of affliction, but lift up their hands as men ready to fight, and their feet as men ready to run, and make straight paths for their feet, *Lest that which is lame be turned out of the way.* That is, least by yeilding to the temptation, they that are weake seek by-paths, for avoiding the danger thereof, whereas they should by strengthening their hands, quit themselves, and walke in a straight and even path. And we are exhorted *to abhorre that which is evil, and cleave to that which is good*, Rom. 12. 9. We must depart from sin and blacknesse, and cleave to that which is good and comely.

Secondly,

Secondly, Christians must goe forth from one degree of grace to another; they must not rest in their first beginnings of grace, of wisdom, and of knowledge; but proceed by making an addition thereunto. And so *Israel went from strength to strength*, Psal. 84. That is, increasing their strength daily more and more: like to this faith the Apostle, we are changed into the image of God, *from glory to glory*, 2 Cor. 3. 18. That is, from grace to grace, from one degree of perfection unto another, untill the image of God be perfectly restored in us, by the Spirit of the Lord. And Gods justice is revealed *from faith to faith*, Rom. 1. 17. to the increasing of faith more and more. Thus *Solomon* tells us, that the path of the just *shineth more and more unto a perfect day*, Prov. 4. 18. His light shall increase untill it come to perfection. Hence it is that the Apostle prays, that the faith of the *Thessalonians* might be *perfect*, 1 Thess. 3. 10. The word in the Originall here Translated *perfect*, signifies to *make even*, because an even number is a perfect number, and so consequently signifies perfection also: the Apostle desires they may be more and more confirmed in their faith, untill they come to perfection.

Thirdly, Christians are not onely to goe forth from that which is evill unto that which is good, and from the smaller degrees of good to greater perfections of it: but also from all kind of superstition and idolatry, unto pure worship and sanctity. Christians must not content themselves to sit downe in *Babylon*, or in *Egypt*; but they must depart out from thence as the Children of Israel did, and to worship the Lord in *Canaan*. Antichrist is called mysticall *Babylon*, Revel. 18. 2. from whence the Lord calls his people, *vers. 4.* And he is called *Egypt* and *Sodome*, Revel. 11. 8. he is called *Sodome* for

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signifies to
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for uncleannesse and wickednesse, as we may see in *Gen.* 19. 5. and *Egypt* for oppressing the people of the Lord, and for idolatry. And *John* addeth, *Where* (saith he) *our Lord was crucified*: either he means he was Crucified under *Rome's* Dominion, by the authority of that Empire, or else Christ was Crucified and put to death in *Egypt*, in respect of his Saints in whom he suffered very much. Now the Lord calleth his people out of *Egypt*, and out of *Sodome* and *Babylon*. That is, from their spirituall idolatry and superstition, and from their sin and wickednesse. Thus the Lord called his people out of *Babylon*, in *Isa.* 52. 11. *Depart yee, depart yee* (saith the Prophet) *goe yee out from thence, touch no unclean thing, goe yee out of the midst of her; be yee cleane that beare the vessels of the Lord.* This was an admonition from the Lord warning those that were faithfull, not to pollute themselves with Babylonian superstitions. And we have the like call from the Apostle, *Wherefore come out from among them, and be yee seperate,* saith the Lord, *and touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you,* 2 *Cor.* 6. 17. This is meant of comming out from spirituall idolatry, as is apparent by *vers.* 14. *Be not unequally yoked,* saith the Apostle, *with unbelievers*: That is, be not yoked or enthralled with Heathenish idolatry, be not partakers with infidells in superstition. The Greeke Scholiast render it thus: *Draw not downe the beame, or incline not in any part to the superstitions of the heathen.* For the metaphor is taken from Beasts, that draw both in one yoke, and the one lesse then the other, draweth downe the burthen upon the other, which is unequall. Thus it is for the faithfull to joine with unbelievers in matter of divine worship and service, it is an unequall thing, and therefore the Lord would have us take no such yoke upon us.

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The Saints ought therefore to goe forth from all superstitious orders whatsoever, with all speed and haste, even as *Lot* departed out of *Sodome*, and as the *Israelites* departed out of *Ægypt*; and with all zeal and earnestnesse of Spirit, even as Gods people came out of *Babylon* with their faces towards *Zion*. Wee must not be partakers of *Babylons* sins, unlesse we be made also partakers of her plagues, *Rev. 18. 4.*

By the foote-steps of the Flock.

Goe forth by the foot-steps of the faithfull in former ages, *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, &c.*

Hence observe,

That the holy paths and wayes of the faithfull in former ages, are as so many holy examples, left for the direction of their Successors, which shall live in after ages. The faithfull are said to be such as walk in the steps of the faith of their father *Abraham*, *Rom. 4. 12.* All the godly (as I hinted before) of former ages, are called a cloud of witnesses, *Heb. 12. 1.* That is, as the cloud of fire led and guided the people of *Israel* in the Wildernesse; so the former examples of holinesse in the Saints, are as guides and directions to us in the wayes of Christ. To this direction the Apostle exhorts the Saints; *Be ye followers of me, even as I am of Christ, 1 Cor. 11. 1.* He doth also give them a limitation; for saith he, *be ye imitators of me*, but how? not in evill, but as I imitate and follow Christ: neither Prophets, nor Apostles, nor the most holiest Saints upon earth are to be imitated by us, but as they imitate Christ, and so they are leading examples unto us. The Greek word used by the Apostle, signifies to imitate in gesture and action, so that they were to shape and fashion themselves to him, as hee did unto

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Christ.

μυμήτης
imitator.

Christ: And again the Apostle saith in Heb. 13. 7. *Remember ye the guides, who have spoken unto you the word of God, whose faith imitate ye, considering the end of their conversation.* The Apostle would have them imitate those that are godly in their faith, but in nothing else: So we should be imitators of the Flock of Christ, according to the Apostle in 1 Thess. 2. 14. *Ye Brethren become imitators of the Churches of God.* And againe saith the Apostle *We desire, &c. that ye be not sloathful, but imitators of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises,* Heb. 6. 11, 12. So many examples as we have in Scripture of those holy men of God, who lived in former ages, so many guides and leaders we must reckon ourselves to have before us.

Now when we look upon the steps of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and other holy men of God, but chiefly upon the Apostles and Ministers of the New Testament; we look upon the Faith and Doctrine of these Worthies; we look how they worshipped, and how they lived; as holy Writ doth set out unto us; for if the word did not testifie of them, how should we know their steps: Also we see in former times, the Prophets and Apostles were Christ's Shepherds, and fed his Flock; we should therefore looke unto their Tents, and there seeke for good and wholsome pasture.

But this is now a great question in the World, where wee shall finde the Tents of these Shepherds, or to whom we may joine our selves; for all say theirs is the way, and how shall we know? Indeed Christ fore-saw these streights of the latter dayes, and hath told us, that many shall come and say, *Loe here is Christ, and loe there is Christ.* For there shall be (saith he) false Christs, and false Prophets, and shall shew great signes and wonders, in
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so much that (if it were possible) they would deceive the very Elect, Mat. 24. 23, 24. But what is now to be done? see the advice and counsell of the Lord himself by the Prophet, saying, Thus saith the Lord, stand yee in the way, and see: alluding to a passenger, who having set forward in his journey, doth come to sundry ways; and not knowing which way to take, hee standeth there doubting, considering and enquiring; but he doth not only say, stand in the way, but see: that is, see and consider seriously the severall courses that holy men have taken in times past; and that upon good grounds, and due examination, having discovered the right way, which all the people of God have walked in from time to time, and walke in it: and what will be the fruit of this? aske for the old way (which is the good way) and walke therein, and yee shall finde rest unto your soules: that is, you shall no more be tossed too, and fro, or be disquieted, or be to seek for the way of God, but you shall find satisfaction and rest to your soules, Jer. 6. 16.

But of whom shall we now enquire? for some will tell us one thing, and some another: *And the foolish will believe every thing, but the prudent will consider his steps, Prov. 14. 15.* But unto whom then shall wee goe to enquire the way of Christ; for

1. If we goe to the Papists: they will not direct us to the Prophets, or to the Apostles, & other holy men of whom the word of God beareth witness: they will not allow that the Writings of the Prophets and Apostles shall be the Tents of these Shepherds here spoken of, and that in them only we may find wholsome pasture: but they will send us to the steps of certaine Popes, Cardinalls, Monks and Fryers: they will send us to the decrees of Popes and popish Prelates, and to

their own constitutions, there is to be found wholesome food say they. Now what a madnesse were it to follow such strange Doctrines, which are contrary to the Doctrine of the Apostles and Prophets; and when they can prove their Doctrine and worship by nothing but by their own authority: such a Pope and so many Cardinals and Bishops did decree this thing, and that; these cannot erre (say they) and therefore we must believe them. Now no wise man can follow after such wicked companions as these are.

2. If we goe to ancient Fathers, they have erred, and therefore wee cannot rely upon them. Wee may not then enquire of *Tertullian, Cyprian, Ambrose, Augustine, Hierome, Bernard, &c.* For all these have had their failings, and have erred in many things: and though they saw much in respect of the ignorance of their times, yet their light was very dim: their light in comparison to that of the Apostles, was but (as it were) the light of a candle, compared to the light of the Sun. And as for those that are of later yeares, that were the first restorers of the Gospel, since the generall Apostacy; as *Wickliffe, Luther, Zwinglius, &c.* These performed many great things, having received singular gifts from God, but these had their failings and errours also.

3. Wee may not goe to Councils and Synods, for these have, and may erre likewise: even the best Councils may erre, for so did the Council of *Nice*: therefore we cannot rely on synodical determinations; but then whether shall we goe?

I answer positively, we must goe to the Scriptures, which the Apostle calleth a *sure word*. And the holy Scriptures can only make us wise unto salvation, it is that which will make the man of God perfect, 2 Tim. 3. 16. The Apostle referring to the voyce heard upon the

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the mount, when Christ was transfigured in glory, calls it a *more sure word of prophesie*, to the which (saith he) *yeec will doe well to take heed*, &c. 2 Pet. 1. 19.

The Scripture of the Olde Testament shined in those dark times, and it was a perfect rule even in the dayes of *Moses*, Deut. 12. 32. The Scripture is a perfect rule of faith, and of good manners: Christ himselfe giving authority to the Old Testament, and *John* the Apostle doth approve & give witnesse to the New Testament, sealing up the divine authority thereof, *Revel.* 22. 18, 19. The cause of mistake in any, is the ignorance of the Scriptures: this Christ telleth the Jewes, *Tee erre* (saith he) *not knowing the Scripture*, Mat. 22. 29. Hence he counselleth them to *search the Scriptures*, Joh. 5. 39. He alludeth to those that digg deep into the earth for those precious things that lie hidden in the profundity thereof; for such a profound search it is, that the Apostle doth so highly commend the noble *Ebreans*.

But now here ariseth another question, namely, *how we shall understand the Scriptures*; for one interprets them this way, and another that way: how then shall we come to the right understanding of them?

I answer first negatively, secondly affirmatively.

1. Negatively thus; no man can by wit, learning, or any humane art understand the Scriptures, because they contain heavenly and divine mysteries in them. I grant that a man by humane learning may understand the literall sense of the Scriptures; but he understands not that spirituall hidden mystery therein contained; he may read the Scripture, and not understand, see, and not perceive, as Christ saith, *Matth.* 13. And the Apostle declareth the same thing, in *1 Cor.* 1. 18. For (saith he) *the preaching of the Crosse is to them that perish, foolishnesse*. That is, it seemeth to them a very ridiculous and empty thing. The Apostle confirms this by a citation

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out of the Prophet *Isa.* Chap. 29. vers. 14. *I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent,* vers. 19. *That is, I will insatiate their wisdom, and their understanding shall perish.* Now then saith he, *where is the wise? where is the Scribe? where is the disputer of this world?* That is, how are all your wisemen, and great Philosophers, that spend much time in searching out the secrets of nature, yet are ignorant of the hidden mystery of Christ. The divine writings of God will not stoop to the spirit of a naturall man: Hence the Apostle saith, *The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishnesse unto him,* 1 Cor. 2. 14. He sheweth that a man that hath no farther light of understanding then that of nature, cannot with his carnall reason reach the heavenly mysteries of the word, which must be understood in a divine and spirituall sense. But

2. The Scriptures are a sufficient rule, when we come to make use of them, with the inward anointings of the spirit of Christ upon our hearts. And hence the Apostle doth comfort the Saints against seducers, saying, *But yee have an unction from the holy one, and yee know all things,* 1 Joh. 2. 20. That is, you are not in danger of being seduced or drawn aside from Christ, because the spirit of God, that anointed Christ a Priest & King, hath also anointed you to be a spirituall Priest, Rev. 1. 6. So that ye may be able to guide and defend your selves against false teachers: this anointing you have received from the *holy one*, even from Christ, in whom is a spring of spirituall graces to be communicated unto us, by which means *ye know all things* needful to be known to preserve you from being seduced, or led from Jesus Christ. And in vers. 27. he saith, *But the anointing which ye have recei-*

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ved of him, abideth in you : and yee need not that any man should teach you : but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie. Although in particular things wee may teach and edifie one another; yet none can teach the mind and the affections to stick fast to the truth of Christ, but the Spirit, which is to lead and guide us into all truth. Now the Spirit of Christ is the best Interpreter of the Scripture; the same Spirit that first indited the Scriptures, must teach us to understand them : when wee have the spirit of the Prophets and Apostles, who were pen-men of the Scriptures, then, and not before, shall wee understand the Scriptures. It is the Spirit of God that must teach us, and lead us into all truth : Hence the Apostle calleth the Gospel the *Administration of the Spirit*, 2 Cor. 3. 8. And this spirit is called the *law of the spirit*, Rom. 8. 2. And the spirit of *adoption* and *freedom*, vers. 15, the spirit of *discerning*, for it searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God, 1 Cor. 2. 10. The spirit of *faith*, 1 Cor. 4. 13. The spirit of *wisdome and revelation*, Ephes. 1. 17. Now wee must bring the Spirit of the Scriptures to understand the Scriptures, the Spirit of God to understand the word of God. For *wisdome will be justified of her children : none of the wicked shall have understanding, but the wise shall understand*, Dan. 12. 10.

And feed thy Kids above the Shepherds tent.

By Kids you heard was meant young Christians that were tender, and wanted to be cherished.

Hence Observe,

1. That the Lord doth tender and take care for young Christians. If the Lord exhorts us not to offend our weak brethren, he wil not himself offend them. Hence

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it is the Lord useth such mild expressions in Scripture, as a Father, Mother, Nurse, and the like; *As a father pittieeth his child, so the Lord pitties his people*, Psal. 103. *Can a mother forget her child, &c.* The Lord pitties us, and beares with our weaknesse, even as a tender mother doth her child: and hee provideth for us, sutable to our weaknesse; milk for babes, as well as strong meate for strong men.

Secondly Observe,

That those that are strong should strengthen and feed those that are weak.

Feed my Kids, my young and tender Christians; we must feed & instruct all those committed to our charge. Thus *Abraham* taught his household, and *Joshuah* served the Lord with his house, so did *Cornelius*: Thus we are to feed, refresh, edifie and build up one another, but especially the weak and tender Christian.

3. This feeding is enlarged from the place where they were to feed; that is, either beside or above the Shepherds tents, both interpretations hold forth the goodnesse of the pasture.

Hence observe,

That young and tender Christians must be fed with wholesome food.

Those that are weak are the most like to be turned out of the way, and therefore should not be fed with superstitious ceremonies, but with solid truth; their feeding should not be only morall observation, but divine Doctrine; they are to be fed above the Tents of false Shepherds, and be brought neer the Shepherds of *Jesus Christ*: they must not be fed with the husks and hog-meat of the world, but with heavenly Manna that comes down from heaven: If those that are natu-

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all know how to give good gifts to their children, and will not feed them with scorpions and stones in stead of wholesome foode ; surely then Jesus Christ the great Shepheard of soules, would not have his Saints fedde with the hard stones of the world, or with the husks of mans invention, but with pure and spirituall food : Christ would not have his sheep put under the hands of Wolves to be fed, but he would have them feed *above* such Shepheards Tents.

4. From the phrase *Tents*, observe : *That our estate and condition here is of no long continuance.* The Apostle calleth his abode in this world as the building of a Tabernacle, referring to the Tabernacle in the Wildernesse, which was removed from place to place : so it is said of Christ, *John 1.* that he came, *and dwelt (or pitched his tent) among us*, as one that was not long to continue : So our life is but as a Shepheards tent, now pitched down, and by and by raised up ; now spread forth, and anon folded up in a bundle ; now we are strong & faire, soone after weake and deformed. Hence it is, that *Job* saith, *man commeth up like a flower*, all glorious and faire, *and is cut downe : he fleeth as a shadow, and continueth not*, *Job 13. 2.* And again in *Chap. 8. 9.* *For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our dayes upon earth are a shadow.* *Eildad* stileth himselfe and his friend to be of yesterday, to declare the shortnesse of their lives, and therefore *wee know nothing* in comparison, as if we had lived a long time ; for our dayes are like a shadow, which is moveable and unconstant, short and transitory. And the Apostle telleth us, *we have no continuing City here.* The life of man (from the beginning to the end) is but a shadow, a vapour, a sinoak, as a blast of wind, as passeth by, and returneth not again ; such an

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uncertainty there is of the life of man, that hee never stands at one stay, but is continually subject to changes.

V E R S. 9, 10, 11.

I have compared thee, O my love, to a company of horses in Pharaoh's Chariot.

Thy cheeks are comely with rows of jewels, thy necke with chains of gold.

Wee will make thee borders of gold, with studs of silver.

CHRIST having instructed his Church, now entereth into an high commendations of her, to the end hee might comfort her against her manifold temptations: shee was possessed with blackness, *vers. 5.* shee wanted Christs presence, *vers. 7.* The first cure Christ giveth in the two first verses, declaring how beautifull and glorious shee is in his sight, even at present, and that shee far exceeds the chiefest Ægyptian horses of *Pharaoh*, both for comely shape, and honorable service: and also that shee is gloriously adorned with the graces of his Spirit, which are for their worth and beauty, as so many precious borders of precious stones, or chains of pearl. The second cure is in *vers. 11.* wherein Christ doth further declare what good shee shall afterward be possessed of, namely, a more plentiful effusion of his Spirit should be powred out upon her, which shall adde to her former ornaments, as it were pure gold beautified and curiously wrought with the silver specks of a new increase of holinesse, whereby shee shall shine more gloriously by the Brightnesse of his glory.

Now

Now all these graces and excellent gifts, which the Church is possessed of already, and promised to receive of Christ hereafter, are set forth by a comparison, with Chariot-horses, furnished with all complements, beseeching King *Solomon* in the midst of all his royalty.

The words in the Originall run thus :

To the company of horses in the Chariots of Pharaoh, I have compared thee, O my Love.

In the words are two things considerable,

1. The sweet Epithite Christ giveth unto his Church,
O my Love.

2. The comparison by which hee sets her forth, namely *by the horses in Pharaoh's Chariot.*

O my Love.

The word *regneh*, translated *love*, signifies a companion, a familiar, a fellow-friend: it hath it's name in Hebrew, רֵעַ
of feeding together; and so generally of society, friendship, and neighbour-hood; of conversing together, and so pertaking of each others good or evil.

רֵעַ
Pavir,
unde.
רֵעַ
Amicus, so-
cius, proxi-
mus.

This title Christ giveth to his Church often in this song, in *vers. 15.* and *Chap. 2. 2. 10. 13.* and *Chap. 4. 1. 7.* and *5. 2.* and *6. 4.* And this he doth to shew, that the Church is the only object of his love. All the beames of Christs love meet in the Church, it is united to that, and is not scattered to their objects.

Hence observe,

That the greatest out-goings of love and friendship from Christ, is toward his Church.

Christ and his people feed together, walk together, and do sweetly converse together; their hearts are knit one to another, as the hearts of *Jonathan* and *David*;

Christ cannot content himselfe with his happinesse and glory, untill he hath communicated of the same unto his Saints. The generall love of Christ is scattered and branched out to all creatures in the world; but his speciall, his exceeding great and rich love is fastned only upon his Church. Christ doth declare wherein hee hath manifested his love unto his Disciples, saying, *I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you,* John 15 15. That is, I have in a friendly manner revealed the secrets of my Fathers bosome unto you, and declared unto you the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, which I should not have done, if you had not been my friends. Christs love to his people is,

1. Infinite and unmeasurable, beyond all imagination or comparison. *As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you,* saith Christ to his Disciples, John 15. 9. Now who can understand with what love the Father hath loved the Sonne? no more can we define and fully set out what is the love of Christ unto his Saints. The Apostle indeed would have the Ephesians able to comprehend with all Saints the breadth, and length, the depth, and height of the love of Christ: but yet for all that he concludes, that it passeth knowledge, Eph. 3. 18, 19.

2. A gracious love: *I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely,* saith the Lord, Hos. 14. 3. Wee have nothing to invite Christ to love us; but his love is free, without the least desert at all.

3. A liberall and a bountifull love: Christ hath parted with that for his people, which was most deare unto him, the soule in his body, the blood in his veines, and (which was more deare unto him then all the rest) the sweet and ravishing apprehensions of his Fathers love,

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love, which was so eclipsed in his agonies, that hee cryed out with a loud voyce, *my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me* : It is reported of the Pelican, that shee openeth her breast with her bill, and feedeth her young ones with the blood distilling from her : and therefore (saith mine Author) the Egyptians used to make that kind an Hieroglyphick of piety and pittie ; and upon that consideration they spared them at their Tables. Such, and far greater is Christ's love to his Saints ; for saith he, *Greater love hath no man then this, that a man lay down his life for his friends*, John 15. 13. And the Apostle saith, that he loved his Church, and gave himselfe for it, Ephes. 5. 25.

4. An eternall love is Christ's towards his Church. *I have loved thee with an everlasting kindness*, saith the Lord, Jer. 31. 3. And again he saith, *with everlasting kindnesse will I have mercy upon thee*. Though the Saints are black and deformed, though they have been negligent and ignorant ; yet Christ doth not lessen or detract his love from them : but still he gives them this Epithite, *O my beloved*, &c.

How should this warm and kinde all our affections unto him again : Christ's love should be a load-stone attractive to draw our love unto him : there is nothing doth more conciliate and attract love, then love it self. Hence it is the Lord saith, *I have drawn them with loving kindnesse*, Jer. 31. 3. Surely if love will not draw out our affection to Jesus Christ, nothing will. Oh what an infinite and wonderfull love is it, that majestie and love should dwell together in the heart of Christ ! Christ doth much condescend in his love to us : so that here is the greatest Majestie, and the greatest debasement that ever was, met in Christ, and all out of love to poor soules.

I have

I have compared thee to a company of horses in Pharaoh's Chariots.

רמא
 Assimila-
 vit, compa-
 ravit, cogi-
 tavit, ima-
 ginatus est.
 In Phiel.
 cognovit,
 putavit, in-
 tentus fuit,
 consideravit,
 agnoscit,
 Schmidt. in
 Pentaglot.

I have compared, or, I have imagined, or thought thee to be like. The word signifies to frame a likeness of a thing in the mind, or to impute a thing to be this or that. So that though the Church had been negligent and slow in the work of Christ, and thought shee had been unable to withstand all her temptations, yet here accounts her as one that was strong and active, as one that was glorious and beautifull.

Hence observe,

That Christ doth esteeme of his servants and people, not as they are in themselves, but as they are in himselfe.

Christ did not account his Church to be sloathfull and ignorant, to be black and sun-burnt, as before shee thought of her selfe: but saith he, thou art fair & beautifull, thou art strong and active, *I have compared thee to Pharaoh's horses*, &c. Christ doth alwayes esteeme of his Church according to the better part, not according as they have made themselves, but according to that which he hath made them; and not onely according to that he makes them to be now, but according to what he intends to make them hereafter.

To a company of horses.

סוס
 Equus, unde
 סוסה
 Equatus;
 unde
 לססות
 Equino, cum
 ? paragogico,
 Boxt. in
 lex.

The word *susab*, which being the feminine of *Sus*, a horse, may in propriety signifie a mare, but here it signifieth a troop of horses: there be many things in Scripture spoken of collectively, as in *Exod. 15. 1. The horse and his rider, for the horses and their riders.* The horse is a warlike beast, as he is described, *Iob 39. 19, 20.* He is terrible, neighing like thunder, he makes a breath, which covers

covers his neck, and shews his courage : he is so fierce, as if hee would devour and swallow down the ground under him. And Solomon saith, *The horse is prepared against the day of battle*, Prov. 21. 31.

We may read it, *my company of horses*; the Hebrew letter *lod*, usually signifies *mine*, although sometimes it is added in the end of a word without signification, as in Lam. 1. 1. Now according to this reading, *my horses*, the Lord doth liken his people to goodly horses, thereby noting the strength and victory which hee giveth them over the enemies. Thus the Prophet speaks of the children of *Israel*, in respect of their victory over Pharaoh, saying, *Thou diddest walke through the sea with thine horses, through the heape of great waters*, Hab. 3. 15. Thus Christ fighting against Anti-Christ, is accompanied with all the Warriours in heaven (that is, all the faithfull in the Church) *following him upon white horses*, Rev. 19. 14.

In the Chariots of Pharaoh.

Pharaoh was a name common to all the Kings of Ægypt, and in the Ægyptian tongue signifies a Prince or Ruler. Now we know the Horses and Chariots of Ægypt were in great request and estimation, not only in Ægypt, but in other Countreys, as the Scripture sheweth, Solomon had horses brought out of Ægypt, 1 King. 10. 28. And in Ezek. 17. 15. The King of Judah sent his Ambassadors into Ægypt, *that they might give him horses and much people*. And the Prophet pronounceth a woe against such as trusted on the horses of Ægypt, forsaking the Lord, saying. *Woe to them that goe downe to Ægypt for help, and stay on horses, and trust in Chariots, because they are many, &c.* Isa. 31. 1.

See Schind.
in Pentag.

Now

Now by this comparison Christ setteth forth the glory and renown of his Church in respect of her victories and achievements; for he having directed his Church to follow the foot-steps of the Flock, and to feed above the tents of false Shepherds, no question now but these false Shepherds, who before were called Christ's companions, will persecute and afflict her: now for the comforting and supporting of her, Christ tells her, shee shall be strong and victorious, she shall be like *the horses of Ægypt*, ready for the battell. And thus when the Lord threatneth wars against the daughters of Sion, he saith, *The shepherds with their flocks shall come unto her, they shall pitch their tents against her round about, &c.* Jer. 6. 2, 3. Now the Lord to comfort his Church against the fury of these false shepherds, compareth her to the horses in *Pharaoh's chariots*; wherein hee sheweth, that his Church should be strong, cheerefull, prompt, and ready for the warre, shee should be valiant and victorious. Thus the Lord promiseth victory to his Church, against those false shepherds which should arise against her, in *Zach. 10. 3.* hee saith, (by a like simile) *mine anger was kindled against the shepherds, and I punished the goats; for the Lord of hosts hath visited his flocke, the house of Iudah, and hath made them as his goodly horse in the battell, &c.* Hence they shall obtaine the victory over their enemies, and therefore he addeth in *vers. 5.* *And they shall be as mighty men which tread downe (their enemies) in the mire of the streets in the battell, and they shall fight, because the Lord is with them, and the riders on horses shall be confounded.* By the shepherds and goats are meant the cruel Governors, which did oppresse the poor sheepe: but now when God shall turne his favourable countenance towards his people, hee will cloath them with
such

such valour and strength, so that of Sheep they shall become great War-horses, with which the Lord will overcome and trample downe his enemies. So in that Christ compares his Church to *Pharaoh's Chariot. Horses*, he doth promise and declare that they shall obtaine the victory over all their enemies whatsoever.

Hence Observe,

That Christ hath armed his People with spirituall armour, power, fortitude and valour to overcome all their enemies. Antichrist shall make war with the Lamb, but the Lamb shall overcome him, Revel. 17. 14. But marke the reason he giveth why the Lamb shall overcome: For *they that are with him are called and chosen, and faithfull*: These are the Army that follow Christ in Heaven, who are of high account with God, though the World call them Hereticks; yet these are called to destroy Antichrist, and will faithfully performe it. Now though their Enemies be strong, and the war sharp, yet the Saints are sure of victory, they shall surely become Conquerours. Thus it is spoken of the two Witnesses in *Revel. 11. 4.* *That if any man will hurt them, that is, if any way persecuting or afflicting them, or attempt to hinder them in the course of their Prophecy, Then fire should proceed out of their mouths to devour their enemies.* Their Enemies shall be destroyed because they despised their Testimony. Thus all the Army in Heaven which follow Christ upon *white Horses, Revel. 19. 14.* they shall make war with principallities and powers, and with all the rulers of darknesse of this World; they war against all the Devils in hell, and against all spirituall wickednesse, having received power and Commission from Christ, and therefore shall overcome. The Saints are

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ready prepared unto this Battaille, they are prompt and ready, they are full of fortitude and valour, yea and far beyond the Horles of King *Pharaoh*. The Horles of *Egypt* were strong and ready for the Battaille, but yet they were but *flesh and not spirit*, Zech. 4. 6. But the Saints are cloathed with all sorts of Spirituall weapons, yea, with the *whole armour of God*, Ephel. 6. and thus all the Saints with *Paul* are more then *Conquerours*.

Verf. 10. *Thy cheeks are comely with rows of Jewells, thy neck with chains of gold.*

Christ having set forth the Churches strength and valour, now continueth his Speech, shewing also, how his Church is decked with his Ordinances and graces. The beauty of the Church is set forth,

First, in respect of her *cheeks*.

Secondly, of her *Neck*.

First, her Cheeks were adorned with rows of Jewells and precious stones, as the manner of the *Egyptians* and other Countries was.

Secondly, her neck is assimilated to Chains of gold, which was a goodly and glorious sight.

Christ in commending the particular parts and members of his Church, speaketh of those that are most in sight, because if they be beautifull and faire, there is not much inquiry made of the beauty and fairnesse of the rest.

Thy Cheeks are comely, &c.

לחך
Unde.
לחי
Gena, max-
illa.

The Hebrew *Lachajalk*, signifies *thy cheeks*, or, *thy jaws*: it is sometimes used for the cheeks or jaws of Beasts, and of Horses, as in *Isa. 30. 28. There shall be a Bridle in the jaws of the people.* *Are*

Are comely.

Comely) or *desireable*, *gracious*, *beautifull*; the word denoteth a faire and comely grace, for which a thing is to be much desired, as in *Psal.* 33. 1. *Praise is comely for the upright.* That is, it is very desirable. And in *Psal.* 91. 5. *Holinesse becometh thy house.* It is a gracious and decent sight to come before thee with holinesse and reverence.

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Pulchrum,
decorum, a-
maximum ef-

with rows of Jewells.

The Hebrew word *Torim*, *rows*, comming from the Singular *Tor*, it signifies an ordinary distribution or disposition of things, and hath affinity with *Thorah*, *Law*, which commeth of the root *Jarah*, which signifies to *dart*, or to *cast forth*, and it implieth an orderly disposing of doctrine; and in Scripture an *orderly disposition* is put for an explanation of the word *Law*; *David* said, *Is this the Law of man*, &c. 2 Sam. 7. 19. which another Prophet speaketh in this wise, *Thou hast regarded me according to the order (or disposition) of a man of high degree*, O Lord, 1 Chron. 17. 17. So the Law of God is an orderly disposition of his precepts, proposing of them to us as a rule of life. The same word *Tor* is also used for a *Turtle-Dove*, which some therefore take here to be *Jewells* or *Ornaments* that had the figures of *Turtle Doves*.

תור

Tori, tori-
es, torula-
res, etc.
Tori.

תורה

Doctrina,
instructio.

תור

Terminus,
ordo, condi-
tio, Ratio:
Item Tur-
tur, avis, vo-
ce quam e-
dit, sic dicta

Thy Neck with chains of gold.

It was an Ornament of honour and dignity, especialy in those Easterne Countries, to weare Chaines of gold, or of pearle or of pretious stones. This word

Charuzim is not found in any other place of Scripture besides this, and is Translated *collars* or *chains*, and it signifies a *Chaine* of pearle or pretious stone; when many pearles are drawne together upon one thred, and made into one chaine and so put about the neck.

Now it is questionable whither this similitude of *rows* and *chains* is to be referred to the Church, as shee was compared to the Horses in *Pharaoh's* Chariot, Ver. 9. or to a woman as shee was a Shepheardeesse in Ver. 8. The comparison will agree to both.

First, we may refer these *rows* and *chains* unto the Church, as shee was compared to the Horses of *Pharaoh*, taking it thus; Christ had decked and trimmed her, even as great Princes doe adorne their horse bridles, he alludeth, no doubt, to the manner of those Easterne Princes, who used to trim their bridles, & other kinds of furniture for the forepart of their Horses, with sundry kinds of Ornaments, as gold, pearle, pretious stones, &c. As we may see in *Judg.* 8. 21. 26. The King of *Midian* had Ornaments of Chains of gold, and pearle, &c. about his Camel's neck. Now by this comparison he meaneth, that there was no greater glory nor comelineffe in these things, then was in the outward parts and members of the Church.

Or if we retaine the similitude of a woman, it is meant of eare-rings and Jewells which adorne the face; as we have it in the Prophet, *I have decked thee with ornaments, I put Bracelets upon thine hands, and a chaine on thy neck, and I put a Jewell on thy forehead, and ear-rings in thy eares, and a beautifull crowne upon thine head, thus wast thou decked with Gold and silver, and thou wast exceeding beautifull, &c.* *Ezek.* 16. 12, 13, 14.

Now

Now the spirituall signification is one and the same, according to either similitude. And to the same end must that be referred, when he saith, *Thy neck with chains of gold*, as may appeare in the places of the Judges before alledged. We must know also, that by the recitall of the particular parts, doth recommend unto us the whole.

These *rows* and *chains* signifie the Ordinances & wholesome Laws of God, which were binding like chains, & directive to guide the Church, as his *goodly horse in the battaile*, Zech. 10. 3. and being managed and guided by Christ shee might overcome all her enemies. And all the Ordinances of Christ were as so many Ornaments of Jewells, and chains of gold, to adorne the face and neck of the Church; and also by her conformity and obedience to them, shee becomes beautifull in the eyes of Christ, and in the eyes of all his people.

Hence Observe,

That the observance of the Laws and holy rules of Christ, doe adorne the Saints as pearles and chains of gold doe the outward man.

The doctrines, instructions, and counsell of Christ, received by his Church, are as so many Ornaments unto her, even as Pearles and Jewells are Ornaments in the Bridles of Horses. This is that we have in Prov. 20. 15. *There is gold and a multitude of rubies, but the lips of knowledge are a precious Jewell.* And againe, *My Son, heare the instruction of thy Father, and forsake not the Law of thy Mother, for they shall be an Ornament of grace unto thine head, and chains about thy neck*, Prov. 1. 8, 9. The observance of the rules of Christ, makes men orderly, gracious, holy, and upright, all which are comely Ornaments
unto

unto Beleivers: patience, humility, love, self-deniall, these and such like graces are the pearles and Jewells of the Saints.

Secondly Observe,

That by the observance of Christs Laws, the Saints are guided, protected, and made victorious. Hence the Church is said to have her *Cheeks comely with rows of Jewells, or Ornaments upon her Bridle*, wherewith Christ guideth and directeth her. Thus the Lord saith, that he made *Judah as goodly Horses for the Battaille*, Zech. 10. 3. That is, he hath endowed his people with valour and strength so that they are as goodly War-horses, who being managed and guided by the hand of God, should be able to overcome and trample downe all their enemies.

Thirdly Observe,

That Christ hath not onely indowed his people with inward strength and valour, but also with outward glory and beauty. In the former Verse he compared her unto *Pharaohs Chariot Horses*, in respect of her inward strength and vigour, so here in this Verse for her outward deckings and Ornaments, such as is the trimming of the horses Bridles, and such like furniture of gold, pearle, and precious stones. This is also demonstrated in *Psal. 45. 13, 14.* where it is said, *The Kings Daughter is all glorious within.* That is, shee is honourable inwardly, having the heart and inward man adorned with faith, hope, love, &c. and being inwardly indowed with spirituall strength, shee is able to withstand her enemies. And it is added, *Her cloathing is of wrought gold, and shee shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needle-worke, &c.* That is, her outward cloathing should be of purled works of gold, set with pretious stones. This outward adorn-

ing of the Saints was figur'd out by Aarons Brest-plate, wherein there was Twelve pretious stones, Exod. 28. 11. And the Garments of the Priests were holy, made of white linnen; all which did shaddow forth the outward beauty, righteousness, and glory of the Saints.

Vers. 11. *wee will make thee borders of gold, with studs of silver.*

Christ having shewed the present happinesse of the Church, in respect of her strength and comelinesse; he now declareth what should be her future happinesse; namely, a further encrease of her graces, and some addition of rich Ornaments. Shee is richly decked already, but her decking shall be yet more and more: shee shall have the most excellent Ornaments of gold and silver, which wrought together doe set forth each other.

In the words observe two things.

First, the maker or framer of these works, *wee*, spoken in the Plurall number.

Secondly, the worke thus framed or made, which is considered in two degrees.

1. In borders of gold.
2. In studs of silver.

we will make, &c.

By the Plurall number *wee*, most doe understand of the Father, Sonne, and Spirit: as in Genes. 1. 26. *Let Us make man*, which is meant of those three in Heaven, the Father the word, and the Spirit, i John 5. 7. Hereupon he is called God our maker, Job 35. 10. and so the Apostle wisheth, *Grace and peace from the Father, Sonne, and holy Spirit*, Rom. 5. 7. And the Apostle speaking of the diversities

versities of gifts, in 1 Cor. 12. 4, 5, 6. faith, that the diversities of gift are of the Spirit, and the diversities of ministries to be of the Lord, that is of Christ; and the diversities of operations, meaning the effectuall working of the Spirit, to be of God..

Againe, the effectuall teaching and Revelation of the glorious Gospell is attributed to the Father, Son, and holy Spirit, as a joint worke belonging to them all.

1. The Father revealeth the Mytery of the Kingdome: thus Christ tels *Peter in Mat. 16. 17. Flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my father which is in heaven,* And againe saith he in *Joh. 6. 45. It is written in the Prophets, they shall be all taught of God, every man therefore that hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh unto me.*

2. The Sonne likewise teacheth the same glorious Mysteries unto men, and is therefore called the *Angel of Gods Covenant, Malach. 3. 1.* And saith he, *None hath seene God at any time, the onely begotten Sonne, which is in the bosome of the Father, he hath declared him, John 1. 18.* And therefore is said to be a *Teacher sent from God, John 3. 2.* And the *Lord which speaketh from Heaven, Heb. 12. 15.*

3. The holy Ghost is also a revealer of these Mysteries unto men; hence the Apostle saith, *The Spirit searcheth all things, even the deep things of God, 1 Cor. 2. 10, 11.* And therefore it is called the *Law of the Spirit of life, Rom. 8. 2.* The *ministration of the Spirit, 2 Cor. 3. 8.* the *revelation of the spirit; Ephes. 1. 17.* And *no man can call Jesus Lord but by the Spirit, 1 Cor. 12. 3.* And so for the sending of the holy Spirit, the Comforter, the Father is said to send the holy Spirit. *For I will pray the Father*

ther (saith Christ) and he shall send you another comforter, &c. And the comforter, which is the holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, &c. John 14. 16. 26. And Christ saith, that he will send the Comforter. John 15. 26. But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send you from the Father, &c. The Father sends the Spirit in Christs name, and Christ sends him from (or in the name of) the Father.

Lastly, the Comforter is said to come of himself, Ioh. 16. 7. Thus it was in the creation of the world, Gen. 1. 1. God, or Elobim created the heaven and the earth. In which place the verb *bara*, being of the singular number, doth signifie the most simple essence of God: and the Substantive, *Elobim*, being of the plurall number, notes out unto us, the Father, Sonne, and Spirit. So all the works of creation, redemption, calling, glorification, are joyntly, and also variously and promiscuously attributed to the Father, Son, and Spirit. So here, *we will make*, &c. The Father, Son, and Spirit do joyntly work in the adorning of the soule. Hence observe,

First, *That workes of grace are very glorious workes.*

The excellency of the worker sets forth the excellency of the work: God made all things very good at the first: And as for man, *let us* (saith God) *make him in our owne image* (which phrase in *our image*, signifieth the unity of the essence of God) now this image was very glorious, and is called *the glory of God*, Rom. 1.

Now all the works of God are glorious: *The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy-workes*, Psal. 19. 1. But much more glorious is the work of grace, or the new creation made upon the soule, which is the renewing of it, according to the i-

image of God, Col. 3. 10. And a *changing of the soule into the same image*, 2 Cor. 3. 18. This image is a glorious image, and it is a glorious work to frame it upon the soule. This work is so glorious, that it commends the work-man and framer thereof; and the worker of this grace is so glorious, that his worth magnifies the works that he doth.

Secondly, observe, *That all our graces, both in the beginnings and encreasings of them, are from God.* Christ is called *the beginner and finisher of our faith*, Heb. 12. 2. He is the *Alpha*, and *Omega*, the first contriver, and the last finisher of all our work: *hee that hath begun a good worke in us*, is the same, that must *perfect that worke* till the day of Christ. Every good gift, as also the increase thereof, *is from God*, Jam. 1. 17. The Apostle attributes all praise to him, *that is able to doe exceedingly abundantly above all that we aske or thinke, according to the power that worketh in us*, Eph. 3. 20. It is a magnificent power that worketh in us, and that power only can worke abundantly more for us. As our bodies came naked into the world, so did our soules, Ezek. 16. 4. It is the Lord that decketh and adorneth us with grace, *verf.* 12. 14. It is from Christ we must receive *gold* to enrich us, and *white raiment* to cloath us, Rev. 3. 18. We put on the new man, as garments, which are additions to our nature, given us of Christ; wee are poore, it is hee that doth enrich us; naked, he cloaths us; deformed, he beautifies us; miserable, he makes us happy: in a word, he works all our works for us.

Borders of gold, with studs of silver.

Now we have the work it selfe commended to us in two degrees.

1. In borders of gold.
2. In studs of silver.

Borders, or *rowes*, the word is the same that wee had in the former verse, and signifies an orderly disposition of things, setting of them in frame and order, as in a row.

Rowes of gold.

The word *Zahab* is rendered *gold*, from the clearenesse and brightnesse of the colour of it; for the clearing of the Heavens comming from the North, is like the colour of gold. This sheweth the excellency of the matter, from which this form is made, to wit, of gold. *Rowes of gold*: He spake of *rowes* in the former verse, but here hee addeth *rowes of gold*, which implyeth an addition and enlargement of grace.

With studs of silver.

The word translated *studs*, signifies some little point or print, a thing, coming of fixing or fastning a thing. The Greek translation readeth it thus, *wee will make likenesses for thee, with prints of silver*. The Apostle useth the word, *stigmata*, marks; speaking of suffering, hee calls them *the marks of the Lord Iesus*, Gal. 6. 17.

Some understand here by *the borders of gold* the foundation of a Christians hope, the very ground work of his faith; and the *studs of silver* to be the superstructure put into the edifice or building, according to that of the Apostle, where he exhorteth the *Hebrewes* not to stay at the foundation or ground-work, but to goe on to perfection, Heb. 6. 1. And because wee are saved by the foundation, and not by the edifice built thereon, according to 1 Cor. 3. 10. So referring the

זהב
Autum.
זהב
Splendor
celi, qui si-
milis est co-
lori auri.

נקר
Unde.
נקורה
Punctum a
figendo vel
insigendo :
plurali
נקרות
Puncta,
Buxt. in
lex.
ἡτοιμασμένα
χρυσοῦ
καὶ ἀσημέν-
σου μετὰ
στοιματων
ἡτοιμασμένων.

first to our justification, and the second to our sanctification, as to the fruits flowing from our sanctification; that is, works of sanctification.

Others understand the words for the increasing of graces, and the bringing of the Saints *from glory to glory*, 2 Cor. 3. 18. From one degree of grace to another, and this is taken from the nature of *Gold*, because it will be beat out to a very large substance. And as for the *prints of silver*, they make it an allusion to that place in Prov. 25. 11, 12. where it is said, *a word spoken in his place (or aptly) is like apples of gold, with pictures of silver.* As an ear-ring of gold, with an ornament of fine gold, so is a wise reprove upon an obedient eare. Which doth declare unto us, that reproofs well given, and well taken, are as beautifull ornaments unto the Saints.

Or wee may understand it of the glorious Ordinances and graces, that should be dispensed in the times of the Gospel, and how they should far exceed those carnall ordinances under the Law: according to this the Lord speaks in Isa. 60. 17. *For brasse I will bring gold, & for iron I will bring silver, and for wood, brasse, & for stoness iron, &c.* This was a promise, that the Lord in the dayes of the Gospel would make all things better, and make a through-alteration of Ordinances; hee would demolish all carnall Ordinances, and set up those that are spirituall. We may understand the words to be a promise of a new supply of graces and strength, that Christ would give unto his Church; or of the glorious ordinances and graces dispensed unto the Saints in the days of the Gospel: all those carnall Ordinances of meats and drinks, and diverse washings should be turned into a more spirituall administration. The Apo-
stle

He telleth us that those rites and ordinances under the Law, stood only in meats and drinks, and diuerse washings, and carnall ordinances imposed on them, untill the time of reformation, Hebr. 9. 10. The Apostle sums up all legall rites and shadows whatsoever, calling them carnall ordinances, of justifications of the flesh, because they did sanctifie only to the purifying of the flesh, freeing of those who used them from legall pollutions: And saith he, these were imposed untill the time of reformation: that is, untill Christ came in the flesh, who should reform all such carnall rites and ceremonies, with all those legal observations & services, exhibiting the truth and reality of spirituall things signified by them, and by instituting a more holy and spirituall worship. We may take either of the two last interpretations, either of the encrease of grace unto the church then present, or of those plentiful measures of grace, and spirituall administrations under the Gospel.

First, if wee take the meaning of the words for an increase of grace, obserue,

That where ever the Lord begins a work of grace, hee doth adde new supplies of grace to such beginnings.

This is that the Apostle was very confident of in behaue of the *Philippians*: That hee that had begun a good worke in them, would finish it untill the day of Christ, Phil. 1. 6. And he saith in Heb. 12. 2. *Christ is the author and finisher of our faith.* When God had made the world, he did not cease from exercising his power; but it is still at work for the upholding of the creation: so concerning the work of the new Creation, I mean the work of grace in the soule: Christ doth not only begin this work, or work some small degrees of it, but he doth proceed to maintain what he hath begun, and
to

to encrease that which he maintains, and to perfect what he doth encrease, carrying the soule from glory to glory.

2. If wee understand the words of those glorious things, that were to be exhibited by Christ in the time of the Gospel

Observe hence,

That the Doctrine of faith, and ordinances of the Gospel, with the graces accompanying them, are much more glorious and excellent, then those under the law.

This glorious Gospel the Apostle sets forth at large in 2 Cor. 3. from vers. 7. unto vers. 11. *But if the ministration of death written and engraven in stones, were glorious, &c. how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be more glorious.* He calleth the law the ministry of death, because the letter killeth, because it doth not communicate an ability to man to keep the same, neither makes any promise of forgiveness unto the transgressor; for the tenour of it runs thus: *Cursed is every one that abideth not in all the things which are written in the law.* It convinceth us of sinne, and therefore it's called the ministration of death and condemnation: but the Gospel is the ministration of the Spirit, and of life and righteousness; because the Gospel doth not only shew the way to life by Christ, but it is accompanied with the power of the holy Spirit, whereby wee are raised from the death of sinne, and quickned to the life of holiness; and it doth also crown us with righteousness, administering the same unto us by Jesus Christ. Hence saith the Apostle in vers. 10. *For that which was made glorious, had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth.* That is, all those legall administrations, which had some kind of glory upon them, yet they

they had no glory comparatively : as the light of a candle shines very bright in the night, but it is obscured in the day-time ; so is the light of the Moone obscured by the light of the Sunne, so likewise is the glory of the Law obscured by the light of the Gospel, that it seems to have no glory or light at all.

Indeed the law was glorious in two respects especially.

1. In respect of the promulgation of it, as the Apostle shewes, *Heb. 12. 18, 19.* There was fire, and blacknesse, and darknesse, and tempest, and the sound of a Trumpet, and the voyce of words, &c. The Lord came in great Majestie to give the Law, even as the Kings of the earth do put on their garments of State when they goe to enact Laws : but Christ discovered more glory upon the Mount ; at his transfiguration, there was *Moses* and *Elias*, and the voyce of God from heaven, and the appearance of the holy Ghost descending upon him, &c. And hence it is, the glory of Mount-Sion exceeds the glory of Mount-Sinai

2. In respect of the matter of the Law, it was glorious : it contained the image and glory of God, which at first was stamped upon mans heart, and after written in the tables of stone ; but now the Gospel holds forth this image as stamped upon Christ, and so represented to us again. This the Apostle testifies unto us in *2 Cor. 4. 4.* saying, *Lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine into their hearts.* And Christ is called the *expresse forme or image of his person*, *Heb. 1. 3.* This is spoken not only in respect of his divine nature, but also in regard that hee is God manifest in the flesh, by whom the glory and righteousness, grace, mercy, goodnesse, wisddome and

and power of God is revealed unto us.

Again the Apostle telleth us, that the glory of the ministrati^on excelleth that of the law, because that of the law is to be done away, and that of the Gospel was to remain, 2 Cor. 3. 11. All those carnall rites and ordinances of the Law were to be abolished; and the Lord promises that in their stead, he wil create new heavens, and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, or come into mind, Isa. 65. 17. The Lord would so alter and change the state of his Church, that it shall seem to be a new world: and the spirituall excellency thereof shall so much exceed that which was before, that the consideration of the one, shall seem to drown and abolish the memory of the other. The Apostle doth argue the abolishing of the old Ordinances, and the continuance of the new, thus: *In that he saith a new covenant* (speaking of the promise of God) *hee hath made the first old: now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away*, Heb. 8. 13. That is, the old legal administrati^on shall be disannulled, or abrogated at the comming in of that which is new.

To conclude, in the times of restauration of the Gospel, all things shall be altered for the better, as in Isa. 30. 26. *The light of the Moon shall be as the light of the Sun, and the light of the Sun shall be seven-fold, as the light of seven dayes*, &c. That is, every administrati^on of the Gospel shall farre exceed in glory and light all those of the Law. And in this respect the Prophet saith, *The Sun and the Moon shall be ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall rule in Zion*, &c. Isa. 24. 23. That is, the light and glory of the Sun, and of the Moon shall be darknesse in comparison of the light and glory of God, that shall shine in his Church under the Gospel. See also in Isa.

60. 19, 20. where the Lord saith, *Thy sun shall be no more thy light by day, neither for brightnesse shall the Moone give light unto thee, but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory: thy sun shall no more goe downe, neither shall thy Moone withdraw it selfe, &c.* If we understand these words of the first times of the Gospell, then by the Sun and Moone we must understand all legall rites and shaddows, which were the lights of those times. But if we understand the last restoration of the Gospell, which shall be after the generall Apostacy, and falling away, by reason of the over-spreading of the darknesse of Antichrist. I say if it be meant of this last restoration, then we must understand by the Sun and Moone all outward and worldly meanes, whereby God hath conveyed any light unto his people: such outward and worldly meanes shall cease, and the Lord will communicate light and grace into the hearts of his people, by some higher, and some more spirituall way, then he hath done formerly.

Thus much for Christ's embracing, commending, and promising unto his Church, wherein he sets forth her excellency in respect of the time then present, and also in respect of the time to come. Now it followeth that the Church doth endeavour to set forth the excellency of her Beloved.

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VERS.

VERS. 12, 13, 14.

While the King sitteth at his Table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof.

A bundle of Myrrhe is my Beloved unto me, he shall lye all night betwixt my Breasts.

My beloved is unto me as a clustre of Camphyre in the Vineyard of Engedi.

IN the three last Verses, Christ set forth the excellency of his Church, in respect of the time that then was, and also in respect of times that should come after: Now the Church in these three Verses sets forth the excellency of Christ, with the excellent effects of all those graces which he had bestowed on her, and that she being so adorned by her Beloved, the odour of his Spirit in her, issued and flowed forth with such a fragrant, as it did very much delight herselfe and others with the redolency thereof. The Church doth, as it were, answer her Beloveds commendations of her, by returning the like praises and commendations unto him, as before he had commended her. The Church setteth forth her Beloved Messiah, not barely or simply, But what one he is to her; that he is one of excellent sweetnesse and redolency. Now the sweetnesse of all Christs heavenly graces unto her, and in her, are set forth to us by three excellent comparisions: towit,

*Spikenard,
Camphyre,
& Myrrhe,*

We have the effects of all his graces and sweetnesse, as our graces from his graces, and our sweetnesse from his

his Sweetness. And we have the cause of all this, namely, our union and neere communion with him, all which is contained in these three Verses.

Vers. 12. *While the King sitteth at his Table, my Spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof.*

In this Verse we have,

First, Christs communion with his Church, which is implied by his sitting at his Table with her. This communion is enlarged by the time, *While the King sitteth*, &c.

Secondly, The effect of this communion, the Church hath her odour by it: *My Spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof*. So that Christ hath his communion, and his Church hath her odour.

While the King sitteth, &c.

Here we have the Kingly feeding of Christ with his people; his repast or feeding is not expressed in the Text, but necessarily implied: for the words according to the Hebrew, verbatim, run thus: *While the King was in his circle (or in his compasse)* which phrase alludes to the Jewish forme of sitting at Table, which was round about, as it were in a circumference or circle. Now by this sitting round, it cannot be meant of Christ sitting alone, but a session with others; to wit, with all his faithfull guests, that together with Christ doe environ this Table.

The King is *Messiah*, who is Lord and head over his Church; they that associate with him are the Saints gathered from all parts of the World: the place of their session is at the Table, for that is meant by the round or circle here specified. The Hebrews were

סבב
Circumvit,
circumvit,
Unde.

סבב
Accubitus
circularis
proprie, in
orbem enim
antiquitus
ad mensam
sede bant:
Buxi, in
Lex.

wont to sit round, or in a circle, as was said before, & an example whereof we have in 1 Sam. 16. 11. when Samuel desired Jesse to send for David his youngest Son, he saith, *We will not sit downe untill he come hither*: in the Hebrew it is, *Because we will not round untill he come hither*. That is, *Wee will not sit downe to Feast before he come*. The Table that these sit at is to be considered according to the place, and that is two-fold.

1. The place of Christ's sitting may be meant of Heaven; and if so, then it sets forth the wonderful sweetnesse of Christ, even whilst he is in the Heavens; then the sence would be as much as if the Church should say, now while the King sits in Heaven, compassed with his holy Angells, and I here on Earth below, there is a wonderfull distance between us, and yet his sweet savour commeth unto me; yea, I doe smell his sweetnesse though at a great distance, even as it were the precious *Spiknard, Myrrhe, and Camphyre*.

2. We may take it for Christ's feasting with his people while they are here on Earth; of his spirituall Banquet with his Saints, feeding them with his word and graces: for thus he saith, *Behold I stand at the doore and knocke, if any man heare my voice and open, I will come in and sup with him, and he with me*, Revel. 3. 20. This spirituall communion that Christ hath with his Church, is called, *The Table of the Lord*, Mal. 1. & 1 Cor. 10. 21. and it signifies that blessed, sweet, and heavenly communion betweene Christ and his Church.

Hence Observe,

That there is a mutuall feasting betwixt Christ and his Church. The unity and communion that we have with Christ is set forth to us, in our sitting downe with Christ at his Table, to the end we may partake with him of his

כי-לא
נכס
כה

Isaiah

his spirituall dainties, and heavenly Mannas, with which he feeds and refresheth his Saints. It is most true, that we have nothing to invite or welcome Christ, but he sends provision of his owne, and comes (as we use to say) at his owne cost; he first sends a spirit of faith, a spirit of love, a spirit of holinesse, a spirit of humility; and then comes and makes a feast of such provisions as himselfe sends. Now what ever may be said in the praise and commendations of a plentifull Feast, the same and much more may be said in the high commendations of this Feast that Christ makes for his Saints.

1. In Feasts there are the chiefeest provisions of meat and drink, &c. So in Christ we have the chiefeest food in all the World. *My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drinke indeed,* saith Christ, *John 6. 55.* That is, his flesh is that spirituall Manna that came downe from Heaven, with which our souls are fed to eternall life. The Crucified flesh of Christ, by which divine justice was satisfied, is the onely meat to refresh our souls: what greater rarity is there in all the World for the soul to feed on, then the graces of Christs spirit, flowing out abundantly upon our hearts.

2. A Feast hath all sorts of provisions: So Christ is variety of food unto the souls of his people. *All the promises are yea, and in him amen,* 2 Cor. 1. 20. There are promises suitable to every condition and relation of his people: there is most pretious and pure blood to wash away their guilt, there is strength to support them in weaknesse, there is a Garment of righteousness to cover the shame of their nakednesse, a Spirit of truth to lead and guide them into all truth; sweet mercies and consolations to comfort them in all their droopings;

Gold

Gold, and Pearles, and pretious stones to enrich them. In a word, there is a plenitude and fullnesse of all grace to feed and fill, their empty and destitute souls. And thus we have the Apostle in 1 Cor. 1. 30. least we should not be too much cast downe with our owne folly, *saith Christ is made unto us of Gods wisdom, and for our uncleannesse and corruption, he is made unto us holynesse and sanctification: and for our misery and bondage he is made unto us redemption.* The Spirit of the Lord appointed Christ, and did solemnly designe him to be home unto every Saints condition, and to be made (as the Apostle saith of him selfe) *all things to all men: he was appointed to preach glad tidings to the meeke, to bind up the broken hearts, to proclaime liberty to captives: to appoint beauty for ashes, joy for mourning, and garments of festivity and praise for sad and heavy spirits, Isa. 61. 1, 2, 3.* So that Christ hath in him sufficiency relative and suitable to all the conditions of the Saints, they may feed on him with all sorts and varieties of good things.

3. In Feasts there is great plenty of Meats and Drinks, and such like provisions, so that none use to goe away hungry from a Feast. So there is abundance of satisfaction in Christ; yea, in him is a redundancy and an overflowing of all good things: when Christ giveth his people good things, he gives them in abundance. As for our redemption, the Apostle saith we have it according to the riches of his grace, Ephes. 1. 7. That is, we have a full and bountifull redemption by him. And the glory that Christ gives to his people is cal'd *riches of glory*, Ephes. 3. 16. And Christ is said, *to give us all things richly to enjoy*, 1 Tim. 6. 17. And *to powre his Spirit richly into our hearts*, Titus 3. 6. If Christ gives of his Spirit, he gives abundance of it; if he gives us peace, he gives

it in abundance; yea, he fills the ſoule with good things.

4. A Feaſt is intended for joy and rejoycing; *ſee* Chriſt doth rejoyce and make glad the hearts of his people: he feeds them with inward tranquillity and joy in the holy Ghoſt, ſhedding abroad his owne love in their ſouls. It is true that the world feeds the Saints with the bread of affliction, but Chriſt gives them to drinke the wine of conſolation *in the world* (*ſaith* Chriſt to his Diſciples) *ye ſhall have tribulation, but be of good cheere, I have overcome the world*; John 16. 33. Hence it is, that the Apoſtle exhorteth Believers to rejoyce; in Phil. 4. 4. *Rejoyce alwayes in the Lord* (*ſaith he*) For as much as you have the true cauſe of joy, you may take it upon good grounds; and therefore *I ſay againe rejoyce*. Chriſt doth make a feaſt of triumph and rejoycing with every ſoule that is brought home unto him; in ſiſtance whereof we have in the Prodigall Son; Luke 15. 11. The Father of the Prodigall brought his ſatted Calfe and kill'd it, to eat & make merry with his Friends. O what greater joy and rejoycing can there be then that ſweet harmony betweene the ſoule and God, reconciled unto it through Jeſus Chriſt! The ſoule that was dead is now alive, and that was loſt is now found, and ſweetly entertained by the Father: what peace and joy is like that which flows from the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt.

5. At a Feaſt there is a meeting of many friends together: ſo here is a good company at Chriſts Table, it is ſurrounded by Chriſt and all his faithfull ſervants. The Father himſelfe is preſent at this Feaſt, for ſaith the Apoſtle, *our fellowſhip is with the Father, and with the Son Jeſus Chriſt*; John 1. 3. The Saints being united to Chriſt by faith, have fellowſhip with him, and by

by him they are united to the Father, whereby they have communion with him also. The Angells are like wife at this feast, rejoycing with the Saints.

6. The Master of a Feast doth use to welcome and cheare up his Guests. It was the custome of the Jews to welcome their Guests by powring out precious Oile upon their heads, as appeareth in Luke 7. 46. & John 11. 9. Hence it is, that David alluding to the Jewish custome, saith, *Thou preparest my Table, and thou anointest my head with Oile*, Psal. 23. 5. Thus Christ as the Master of this heavenly Feast, cheereth up his Guests by powring forth the Oile of grace, and of gladnesse upon the heads of his people, and by filling of their hearts with joy and gladnesse. Thus we find Christ welcoming of his Church, in Song 5. 1. saying, *Eat O my friends, drinke ye, drinke abundantly, O Beloved*. Thus Christ fraternith with his people, and conveyeth all the dainties of salvation unto them, and thus his people come to enjoy Christ, and all his comforts and graces, wherby they have a Feast of grace, and at last shall come to a Feast of glory.

My Spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof.

Here we have the effect of this communion, *My Spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof*. Christ hath his communion with his Church, and his Church hath her odour from that communion.

Spikenard is a very pleasant smelt. Some of the Rabbinis thinke that *Nardus* was like to *Saffron*. It seems there was diverse sorts of it. One sort is called *Nardus celtica*, which the French men call *Lumard*, and we in a terme not far from theirs call it *Lumardus*. Another sort was called *Nardus affrica*, of which was made an Oint-

ointment of all others most precious; and (saith *Pliny*) of all other spices Spikenard is of greatest estimation: the ointment of Spikenard was very precious, which they used to powr out and anoint men with; such was the ointment that *Mary* anointed Christ with, as hee saith Table, *and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment*, John 12. 3. Mar. 14. 3. This Spikenard was very costly and precious, as may appeare, in that it grew in *India*, or in *Assyria*. And for this most precious oyle which was made of this sweet plant of *India*, it had the nature of a *warming, piercing, digesting*. The herb it self is hot in the first degree, and dry in the second, whereby it falleth out that it is of an excellent *comforting* nature, and also *repercussive*.

*Plin. l. 11.
cap. 12.*

Now under this odoriferous *nard*, we may mystically understand the most precious gifts and graces of the Spirit of Christ, either

First, as the sweetnesse of them flows from him, unto the Saints, or

Secondly, as they are planted in the hearts of his people, sending forth a sweet savour from thence.

First, we may understand this sweet ointment made of *spikenard*, to be meant of Christs graces in himself, from which a sweet and redolent savour descends down to all his Saints. The words in the originall will indifferently bear a double translation, because the letter which is the affix, sometimes formeth the adjective, and so wee may translate it thus; *that which is of spikenard gave the smell thereof*. And so *Juvius* renders the words. According to this translation, the Church praiseth the sweetnesse of Christ, setting forth how sweet he is unto her: as if shee should say, even now while the King my Beloved is sitting in the Heavens,

*Nardinum
edit odorem
Juvius. Jan.*

D d

compassed

compassed about with his holy Angels, and I here upon earth below; there is a wonderfull distance between us, and yet the sweet savour of him commeth unto me: yea, I doe smell his sweetnesse, even as it were the precious ointment made of Spikenard, or

נרד
Mea nar-
dus.

Secondly, Wee may take the words as they are in our translation, My *Spikenard*, so *Arius Montanus* renders it: And then wee may understand the graces of Christ in the Saints, as the fruits of faith, love, and all the sacrifices of prayers and praises of the Saints: these and many such like fruits the Saints shew forth by vertue of their communion with Christ. The Apostle in *Rom. 6. 3, 4.* sets forth this communion of the Saints with Christ, under an elegant metaphor, representing untous, that as Plants engrafted do receive moystrure, juyce, and nourishment from the stock, whereby they sprout out, budd, and bear fruit: so the Saints, being as it were inserted into Christ, doe receive vigour and life from him, whereby they walke in the spirit, and become spirituall, holy, gracious, & active in all good works. Now good and gracious works flowing from the Spirit of Christ, are called fruits, which signifie not only an issuing from the stock, but the sweetnesse and pleasantnesse of them. And thus the Wise man saith, *A good name is better then ointment*, Eccl. 7. 3. because it hath a good savour with it: And on the contrary, the *Israelites* said to *Moses* and *Aaron*, *See have made us stincke before Pharaoh and his servants*: That is, in their credit, good name, and estimation. And again in *Prov. 15. 8.* *The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination unto the Lord, but the prayer of the upright is his delight.* That thing is most abominable to the Lord, which the wicked think to be most excellent, and whereby

whereby they think to be most of all accepted : but the prayers and praises of the godly are delightfull in his eares, they have the savour of a sweet odour before him.

First, observe hence from the first interpretation,

That the graces which are in Christ, cast a sweet odour and perfume into the hearts of all believers. Ointment and perfume rejoyce the heart, saith Solomon, Prov. 27. 9. So all Christs graces, which are the anointings of the Father upon him, are sweet, rejoycing the hearts of the Saints. Christ was anointed with the oile of gladnesse above his fellows, *Psal. 45. 7.* His graces were matter of joy and gladnesse to himselfe, and to all his Saints. *Christ's love is better then wine*, because it revives, strengthens, and refresheth the hearts of his servants. All Christs graces are very fragrant and redolent, refreshing the senses of the soule; his very word and Gospel is a *savour of life unto life*, 2 Cor. 2. 16.

Secondly, according to the latter interpretation, observe,

That the graces of the Saints are very savoury and delightfull.

Their graces are delightfull,

1. To God.

2. To Man.

1. They are delightfull to God, as being the fruits of his own Spirit : God loves and delights in none but in himselfe; but when hee communicates any of the graces of his Spirit, they are part of himselfe, and hee greatly delights in them. As a Father delights in his Child, because he seeth part of himselfe in his Child : so the Lord conveyeth his owne grace and image into

our hearts, and then delights to see them there.

2. The graces of faith, love, prayer, and praises of the Saints are acceptable to God by the mediation of Jesus Christ. Thus the Apostle saith, his preaching of the Gospel was *unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish*, 2 Cor. 2. 15. He alludeth to the ointment of the Priest, and the sweet incense which they offered unto the Lord. And David prayeth, that his prayer might be directed before the Lord, *as incense*, Psal. 141. 2. He meaneth such incense or perfume, which was a confection of sweet spices, made after the Art of the Apothecary, pure and holy, and was by the Priests burned upon the golden Altar every morning before the Lord, *Exod. 30. 34, 35, 36*. Which Incense was a figure of the prayers of the Saints, acceptable to God, through the mediation of Jesus Christ.

And thus it is said of Noah's burnt-offerings, which he offered, after the deluge of waters ceased, that the Lord smelled a savour of rest in them, *Gen. 8. 20*. And Christ is called that Angell that stood before the Altar, having a golden Censor, and there was given unto him, *much incense*, that he should offer it, with the prayers of all Saints upon the golden Altar, which was before the Throne, *Rev. 8.*

3. That is, Christ the Angell of Gods presence, who had a golden Censor, as the High Priest had, to offer Incense, *Heb. 9. 4.* unto whom was given *much incense*, like those sweet spices which the Priests burnt upon the golden Altar, *Exod. 30. 34.* which he was to offer with the prayers of the Saints, mingling the sweet odour of his own merits with their prayers, and so offering of them up upon the golden Altar, to wit, his own selfe, which was figured out by that golden Altar upon

upon which Incense was offered, Numb. 4. 11. and overlaid with gold, Exod. 30. 3. And thus hee makes our prayers acceptable unto God, that hee smells a sweet savour in them.

2. The graces of Christs spirit in the Saints, are not only savoury and delightfull to God by Jesus Christ, but they are savoury to men also. To this purpose tends that of the Apostle Peter, when he exhorts us to have our conversation honest among the Gentiles, that they which speake evill of us, as of evill doers, may by our good works which they shall see, glorifie God in the day of their visitation, 1 Pet. 2. 12. This odour is bone fame, the savour or smell of a good name: for a good name is better then ointment, Eccles. 7. 3. And this the Apostle calls pure religion, and undefiled before God, even the Father, to visit the fatherlesse and widows in their adversity, and to keepe our selves unspotted of the world, Jam. 1. 17. And the Apostle Paul willeth us to walke wisely towards them which are without, Coloss. 4. 5. That is, wee should walk in-offensively towards them, giving of them no offence, but rather to win them by a sweet, holy, and godly conversation.

V E R S. 13.

A bundle of myrrhe is my beloved unto mee; he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts.

THe Church having praised her Beloved for his graces bestowed on her: Shee now declareth farther how delightfull, and how really welcome Christ is to her: And lest any should think it vain-glory for her to com-

commend her own graces, shee now sheweth by what meanes she became so sweet and savoury : shee plainly declares, that it was not of her selfe ; but saith she, *My beloved is unto me a bundle of myrrhe, &c.*

In this verse we have,

First, The Churches declaration of her Beloved's sweetnesse.

In which Declaration consider,

1. A note of propriety ; *My beloved is unto me.*
2. Of her affection ; *Beloved.*
3. Of Christs sweetnesse, expressed by a *bundle of myrrhe.*

Secondly, we have Christs entertainment from the Church ; he shall *lie and lodge* with her.

This is amplified by two adjuncts.

1. Of the time ; *all night.*
2. Of the place ; *betwixt my breasts.*

A bundle of myrrhe is my beloved unto me, &c.

Plin. lib. 12
cap. 16.

לִּגְוִי
Ligavit,
colligavit :
Unde.

לִּגְוִי
Fasciculus,
oculus.

A bundle of myrrhe : Myrrhe is an odoriferous tree, and saith Pliny, it sweateth out a sweet gumme called *stacte*, which is preferred before all others. This gum is also called myrrhe, from the tree whereon it grows : it is gathered and bound up in baggs ; and though the word in the Hebrew be rendered a bundle, yet according to the nature of myrrhe, it being a gum or liquid thing, it may be more aptly called a *bag of myrrhe*. for the word is rendered, Prov. 7. 20. *A bag of money.* And in Gen. 42. 35. *A bundle of money.* The word may indifferently be used for any thing that is made up in a bag or bundle.

As for this *Myrrhe*, it is an Indian Tree, and it is very sweet of smell ; and *leniter amara*, meanly, or somewhat

what bitter in tast, as the Naturallist writeth, and of the second degree hot and dry, and of a preserving nature, & it is reckoned of God for one of the most principall & chiefeſt of ſpices, *Exo.* 30. 23. which holy ointment figured out the graces of Chriſt, and the graces of the Saints. Chriſt is ſaid to be *anointed by the Spirit*, *Iſa.* 61. 1. And with *the oile of gladneſſe*, or of grace, *Pſ.* 45. 7. And the Saints *have an unction from the holy one*, *1 Joh.* 2. 20. This was one of thoſe precious things with which the wiſe men honored Chriſt at his birth, *Mat.* 2. And it is of much uſe for embalming; for which cauſe *Nicodemus* in *John* 19. 39. doth mixe myrrhe with Aloes, for the embalming the body of Jeſus. Hereby the Church declareth how ſweet and comfortable Chriſt is to her, and how well pleaſed ſhee is with all his diſpenſations, and that hee is alwayes as a ſweet odour unto her heart.

A bundle, or bagge is for to keepe ſafe thoſe things which are in danger to be loſt: *As the ſoule of my Lord ſhall be bound in the bundle of life with Jeſovah*, *1 Sam.* 25. 29. And thus *Job* ſaith, *his iniquities are ſealed up in a bag*, *Job* 14. 17. And when Chriſt wiſheth his Diſciples to get an heavenly treaſure, he ſaith, *provide your ſelves bagges which wax not old*, *Luk.* 12. 33. And for thoſe things we loſe and waſt, we are ſaid to put in a bagge with holes, *Hag.* 1. 6. Now this denoteth the Churches care to enjoy and poſſeſſe Chriſt, with all his graces and communications; and with the benefits of his death and reſurrection: all theſe are bound up ſafe in a bundle, or bag; ſhe is carefull that ſhe loſe not the ſweetneſſe or vertue of any of the graces of her Beloved: and theſe are all ſafe in Chriſt, as bound up in a bundle.

My

My beloved.

Christ having called the Church *his lone*, ver. 9. Here the Church returneth the same Epithite to him again, and calls him her *Beloved*; not that she first loved him, but he loved *his Church*, and gave himselfe for her, Ephes. 5. 25. Whereupon she loveth him again, because he loved her first, 1 John 4. 10.

The Hebrew word, *Dod*, *wel-beloved*, is written with the same letters that *David*, whose name signified *Beloved*, he was a figure of Christ, and his Father after the flesh, Rom. 1. 3. And Christ is called *David*, Jer. 30. 9.

Unto mee.

A speech of faith & propriety, applying Christ and all his graces unto her selfe: A like example the Apostle gives us, when he saith, *Christ loved me, and gave himselfe for me*, Gal. 2. 20. He applyeth the benefit of Christ's death to himself in particular, to teach us speciall faith, and to enflame our love to him, as if he had shed his blood for us alone, and in particular.

He shall lie all night betwixt my breasts.

לון
Pernoctare.

He shall lodge, or he shall abide: The word *lun*, which signifies to lodg, or stay all night, is of the future tense, which yet frequently in the Hebrew bears the signification of the time past. And though the word properly signifies a nights lodging, or abiding, as in Gen. 28. 11. yet it is used for a longer continuance, as in Psal. 49. 12. *Adam lodged not in honour*: that is, he stayed no long time in honour. And in Psal. 25. 13. *his spouse shall lodge in goodnesse*: that is, it shall continue in goodnesse. And in Psal. 55. 7. *I would lodge in the wilderness*, that

That is, I would remaine in the Wilderneffe. This denotes unto us the Churches desire, that Christ might continue and abide with her, that he might lye downe, and settle his abode with her for ever.

Or we may understand it for the adjunct of time, to wit, *All night*, &c. the night commonly signifieth the time of darknesse and affliction, it being the time of solitarinesse and meditation, as in *Psal. 77. 3, 4. 6. & Psal. 63. 7.* And so in *Isa. 26. 9. With my soule have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me, will I seeke thee early.* That is, in the greatest fears and dangers, I have made my addresse unto thee. That noteth, that Christ with his consolations, should be her continuall joy and comfort, whom shee would rest on in the times of the greatest tentations and troubles.

Betwixt my Breasts.

The Hebrew word that signifies a *Breast*, or *Pap*, is derived of a *Chalde* word, that signifies to powre out, because Milke is powred forth from the Breast. The Church seemeth to allude to the manner of women and Maids, who were wont to weare betwixt their Breasts, or in their bosomes, Nosegays, as we call them, made of very odoriferous and sweet smelling flowers, of which they made great account, esteeming of them as a principall part of their Ornaments. So the Church here finding and feeling her wel-beloved to be so sweet unto her, saith, that he is as a bundle of sweet Myrrhe, and that shee will set him in her bosome, even betweene her Breasts, and there he shall remaine, that shee may alwayes smell his sweetnesse. Shee sheweth also of what great account Christ was to her, that shee

E c

would

שר
Mamma, a
Child.

שדא
Effudit, quasi
a mamma
effundunt
lac.

would place him so nigh her heart, as it were, as betwene her Breasts; that as the Apostle saith, *Christ might dwell in her heart by faith*, Ephes. 3. 17.

Or the Breasts may signifie the ministry of the Church, feeding of the Saints with the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby, 1 Pet. 2. 2. According to this the Prophet saith, *Rejoyce yee with Jerusalem, &c. that yee may suck and be satisfied with the Breast of her Consolations, that yee may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory*, Isa. 66. 10, 11. According to this Interpretation the Church declareth how exceedingly shee should be nourished and fed by the sweet administrations of Christ unto his Church; and that shee should be spiritually nursed with her, and receive abundance of consolation from her, being nourished together by the doctrine of the Gospell of Jesus Christ. Let us take a few Observations from hence.

A bundle of myrrhe, &c.

Myrrhe you heard was very sweet in smell, but bitter in tast, and it was a precious ingredient in the holy Oyle.

Hence Observe,

First, *All the dispensations of Christ are very sweet and savory unto a beleiving soule.* There is such a kind of complacency, or well-pleasednesse in the hearts of the Saints, that they doe as it were acquiesce and rest well pleased in his grace and goodnesse. It is true, Christ is in this world a kind of a bitter sweet unto his Saints, as I may so say: but his sweetnesse doth swallow up all his bitternesse: his bitternesse is in the lowest degree, but his sweetnesse in the superlative, so that let his dispensations

penfations be what they will, his Saints are never weary of him; yea, they take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for his sake: and when they are weake in themselves, then they are strong in him, and more then Conquerours, as saith the Apostle. And thus Christ is wellcome to the Saints upon any conditions whatsoever: Let him come with a smile or with a frowne; with a rod or with sweet imbracings; in what shape soever he represent himselfe, he is accepted of them. Thus it was with Peter, *Lord, if it be thou (saith he) bid me come unto thee on the water*: So it is with the Saints, they refuse not to venture, even upon the Boisterous waters to goe unto Christ. When *Samuel* told *Ely* of judgement to come upon his Family. *It is the Lord (saith he) let him doe what he will*. So *David*, *I was dumb and opened not my mouth because thou didest it*, Psal. 39. And *Job*, *Though he kill me, I will trust in him*. Hence it is, that the Children of God, though they walke in darknesse, and have no light at all, yet they will trust in the name of the Lord, and stay themselves upon their God, Isa. 50. 10. Though Christ be like myrrhe, somewhat bitter in tast, in respect of the amarulency and bitterness of trouble, temptation, and the Crosse, yet he is also sweet, like a bundle of myrrhe, refreshing the senses of the soule, yeilding of them abundance of sweetnesse and satisfaction.

Secondly Observe,

That all our comforts in Christ are very sure comforts. All his graces, goodnesse and sweetnesse is as a bundle, or bag of myrrhe, bound up safe for us. Hence the Apostle saith, there is laid up for him a Crowne of righteousness, 2 Tim. 4. 8. It was kept sure for him, yet was

treasured up for him, as we use to treasure up Jewells and precious things. So the Apostle *Peter* saith, our *Inheritance is reserved in Heaven for us*, 1 Pet. 1. 4. These things are kept sure and certaine for us, they are not given to us, as grace was given to *Adam*, who might lose it at his pleasure; but we are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, Vers. 5. Hence it is, the Covenant of grace and of eternity is called, *The sure mercies of David*, Isa. 55. 3. So are all things we have in Christ, very sure and safe; our comforts in him are sure comforts, our peace a sure peace, our joy a sure joy, and the sweetnesse and redolency of his graces are sure unto us, they are in him as myrrhe bound in a bundle, or put into a bag which cannot be lost.

My Beloved.

Christ having called his Church, his *Love*, here shee returns the same Epithite unto him againe.

Hence Observe,

That the Saints returne love to Christ, for his love first manifested unto them. Thus we have the Apostle, *we love him because he loved us first*, 1 John 4. 10. The flame of Christ's love warming of our hearts, doth kindle a fire of love burning toward him againe. The Trumpet of his goodnesse doth cause his people to eccho back praises unto him. If first he love us, we then can love him; if first he praise us, we then can praise him; if he goe before and draw us, we shall follow after. Then let us eye Christ loving, exalting, and praising of us, that so we may abundantly love, exalt, and praise him.

My Beloved is unto me.

The Church doth appropriate the sweetnesse of Christ unto her selfe.

Hence Observe,

That the Saints doe apply all the benefits of Christ unto themselves in particular. We have an example of this in the Apostle, when he saith, *Christ loved me and gave himselfe for me,* Gal. 2. 20. He applieth the benefits of Christ's death to himselfe in particular. And Thomas, *my Lord, and my God:* and Job, *my Redemer:* and David useth this word of propriety eight times together, in Psal. 14. 2. *The Lord is my rock, and my fortresse, and my Deliverer, my God, my strength, in whom I will trust, my Buckler, and the horne of my salvation, and my high Tower.*

He shall lodge.

He shall continue and abide with me.

Hence Observe,

That those that have once felt the goodnesse of Christ, desire always to enjoy the same. This did something appeare in the Jewes that followed Christ; when Christ told them of the bread of life, they cried, *Lord evermore give us of this bread,* John 6. 34.

He shall lodge all night.

He shall continue with me in the night of trouble and Tentation.

Hence Observe,

That Christ is never neerer his people, than in their greatest afflictions. Christ is neere unto his people, when some-

sometimes they thinke him to be farthest off. Thus it was for a time with Christ, when he said, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* Yet God was never nearer Christ, assisting and upholding him by his power, then at that time. And so David in *Psal. 77.* complaineth that his Spirit was overwhelmed, Vers. 3. upon which he saith, *Will the Lord cast off for ever? And will he be favourable no more? is his mercy cleane gone for ever? doth his promise faile for evermore? hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?* But saith he at last, *This is my infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right hand of the most high.* That is, I will remember his wonderous works of old, how he led his people out of *Egypt.* by a strong hand, and therefore is able to keep me in the greatest troubles, and deliver me out of the greatest dangers.

He shall lodge all night betwixt my Breasts.

If we take that Interpretation as alluding to those that weare Nosegays in their bosomes, that they may smell the sweetnesse of them: by which is signified the great esteeme the Church hath of Christ.

Then Observe,

1. *That the Saints have a high account and esteeme of Jesus Christ.* They place him betweene their Breasts, neare their heart; nay, in their hearts: so saith the Apostle in *Ephes. 3. 17.* *That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.* Christ hath the heart for his entertainment in the Saints, he is set in the highest part and top of all their affections. It is true, that worldlings slight, scorne, and cast Christ at their heels, as it were; yet all the Saints doe magnifie him, and account him very preci-

precious, they give him the highest roome in their soule, and doe, as it were, make him Commander there in chiefe. And as for carnall men, who mind earthly things, they have nothing but carnall joyes, and carnall comforts, and carnall injoyments, these and such like lodge all night betweene their Breasts, these take up the best rooms in their souls; but the Saints delight that Christ and his holy Spirit, and all the operations thereof, should lie all night betweene their Breasts, that these should dwell, and operate in their hearts.

Secondly, if we take the latter interpretation, that these Breasts should be meant of the ministry of the Church, feeding and refreshing of the Saints with the sincere milk of the word, then it yields us this Observation.

2. *That Christs ministry in the Church, is a very sweet refreshing, nourishing ministry.* The Members of Jerusalem might suck and be satisfied with the Breasts of her consolations, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory, Isa. 66. 10, 11. The Saints may be spiritually nursed and cherished by one another. Thus the Apostle tells the *Thessalonians* in 1 Epist. Chap. 2. Vers. 7. *But we (saith he) were gentle among you, even as a Nurse cherisheth her Children.* That is, we were so tenderly affected towards you, as a Nurse which beareth with a froward Child, that we might cherish and nourish you, by imparting unto you the Gospell of Christ: *Because (saith he in Vers. 8.) yee were deare unto us.* And thus the Apostle tells *Timothy*, that he should be a good minister, *nourished up in the words of faith,* 1 Tim. 4. 6. And the Saints are abundantly comforted and refreshed in the Churches Consolations, as in *Psal.* 36. 8. *They shall*

be abundantly satisfied with the fatnesse of thy house, and thou shalt makethem drinke of the River of thy pleasures. And in Psal. 65. 4 we shall be satisfied with the goodnesse of thy house, even of thy holy Temple. By goodnesse he meaneth good things, by which good things we may understand the principall of all good things, namely, the holy Ghost; for that which is called good things in Mat. 7. 11. is called the holy Ghost, in Luke 11. 13. So that the ministry of the holy Ghost is that which refresheth and comforteth his Saints. It is not the ministry of men, or of human wisdom, that yeilds the Saints so much comfort and refreshing, but the ministry of the holy Spirit, the ministry of life and righteousness, when Christ holds out unto us the Breasts of joy and consolation.

Verf. 14. *My Beloved is unto me as a cluster of camphyre (or Cypres) in the Vineyards of Engedi.*

The Church goeth on in commending her Beloved, and the graces she receiveth from him; comparing him to another sweet smelling thing: as before shee had resembled him to *spiknard*, Verf. 12. and to *myrrhe*, Verf. 13. So here to the sweet berries or clusters of the *Cypres Tree*.

In the words observe,

1. A declaration of Messiah's sweetnesse, he being compared to *camphyre* or *cypres*.

This sweetnesse of his is amplified,

First, by the quantity, it is a cluster of *camphyre*.

Secondly, by the place where it is to be had, in the *Vineyards of Engedi*.

2. A note of propriety; *My beloved is unto me*, &c. as in the precedent verse.

A cluster of Camphire.

Camphire is a sweet gum, and for smell much like unto *Spikenard*: *Cyprus* is a tree, whose fruit groweth in clusters, and is very sweet. The Hebrew word *Camphar*, from which *Camphire*, and also *Cyprus* seemeth to be derived, signifieth to cover, or plaister over, Gen. 6.

14. The cover which was laid upon the *Arke*, is set forth by a word derived from this, and it is applied to the covering or appeasing of an angry countenance, Gen.

32. 20. To pacifie wrath, Psal. 78. 38. It is also used to signifie propitiation, favour, and mercy, as in Deut. 21. 8.

It is often used to expiate and purge away uncleanness, and to make attonement. Thus it was applyed to things under the Law, see Levit. 16. 33. and 23. 27. This may note unto us the sweetness of Christs redemption, and the fruits of his death, whereby hee became as a cluster of redemption unto his people; for as a cluster consisteth of many berries compact together into one bunch, so the redemption of Christ hath all mercy, grace, and love compacted together: there is no grace, but it is in the cluster of mans redemption; as mercy, justice, power, wisdom, love, and free grace, all these are gloriously manifested in the worke of our redemption.

Now all the graces of our redemption in Christ have a fragrancy and a sweet odour with them, they are like a cluster of camphire for their sweet odoriferous smell, whereby the Saints are continually refreshed and comforted.

כפר
Texin, op-
ruit nomen
significat ex-
piatio, re-
demptionis
pretium,
Exod. 24.
30.

In the Vineyards of Engedi.

Engedi was the name of a place in the Tribe of *Judah*, appeareth, *Josh.* 15. 62. It should seem to be a City famous for sweet smelling trees, and of a very fruitful soile, for Gardens and Vineyards. This City *Engedi*, was sometimes a place of safeguard and defence unto *David*, when he hid himself from the fury of *Saul*, as in *1 Sam.* 24. It was called *Hazazon Tamar*, *2 Chron.* 20. 2. where *Jehosaphat* prayed, and was delivered from his Enemies. It was also a place full of rocks and wild goats, adjoyning to the Sea-coast. This noteth unto us the great victories which the Church obtaineth by Christ: hee hath brought a full redemption unto his people, and will give them victory over all their enemyes.

עין גדי The word *Engedi*, or *Gnn-gedi*, is a compounded word: the first part signifieth an eye or fountaine; the latter part of the word signifies a Kid, or a company: hereof it was that *Leah's* adopted sonne *Gad* tooke his name, which signifies a troop, or company. Considering the rocks and wild Goats in the bounds of *Engedi*, here may be an allusion from those young Goats, who from the Rocks, would not onely cast their eyes upon the Fountains below, which were their watering places; but also upon the Vineyards, desiring to root up and spoil the Plants there. But as the owners of the Vines would wall and fence their Vineyards in such a manner, that these Goates or Kidds, which longing and bleating after the pleasant plants, could not come to spoile them: even so it is with the wicked persecutors of the world, they may see and cry after the Saints, and much desire their destruction:

but Christ the owner of this Vineyard hath set a hedge about his Saints, as hee did about Job, so that Satan could not touch his soule: and Christ himself is a wall of fire round about his Church, Zech. 2. 5. where the holy Ghost alludeth to the practice of Travailleurs in the Wilderness; who surrounded themselves with a fire, and did thereby fray away the wild beasts, and kept them off from annoying them: Christ is such a defence unto his people, and therefore they must needs be in great safety, who have such a defence, notwithstanding all the attempts of the wicked against them.

As for these words of propriety and affection: *My beloved is unto me, &c.* Having spoken of them in the precedent verse, I shall not repeat them again, but shall only give you two or three Observations from this verse.

First, Observe,

That redemption by Christ, and the fruits thereof are very savoury and delightfull unto the Saints. The pardon of sinne, and reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ, with that spiritual peace flowing from thence, with all those heavenly graces that follow and accompany this redemption; these cannot but be very delightfull and precious unto the Saints, yea, and much more precious and sweet then all *campfire*, and *Cyprianes* are unto any worldly sense. Here is, as it were, a cluster of graces compacted together, and that do shine forth together most gloriously, being the very life of a Christians joy and comfort. In our redemption there is, as I said before, a cluster or heap of mercies and graces compacted together, as rich mercy extended to the vessels of mercy, the Saints are made vessels of mercy, & by redemption, these vessels are filled full of mercy, mercy

is manifested upon them. There is also rich love in our redemption, in that the Father gave his Sonneto death for us: and the Son also gave himselfe, and laid down his life for us; greater love then this was never shewn by any.

Again, Free grace doth exalt it selfe in this work also; for we were bought with a price, & that not with our own, but with the precious blood of Jesus Christ.

In a word, in our redemption all the attributes of God shine forth most gloriously; as for justice, it is honoured, because it is satisfied: and for mercy, it is enlarged, and hath a portion aswell as justice: his power is magnified in effecting such a glorious work, and his wisdom in finding out, and in contriving, and in finishing the worke of our redemption. Here are graces compact together, even as clusters of berries on the *Cyprus* tree: Thus Christ is sweet to his Saints, in redeeming and saving of them; hee is like a cluster of camphire, or of cyprus.

Secondly, observe;

That Christ will be a safeguard and shelter for his Saints in the midst of the greatest dangers.

Wicked men may look down from their mountain, and behold the Saints in Christs vineyard, and desire much to spoile those tender plants, but Christ will be a wall of defence unto them. Thus David declareth the Lord to be his defence, and hee expresseth it nine times together, in *Psal. 18. 2.* *The Lord (saith he) is my rocke, and fortresse, &c.* Two names of a rock are in this verse; the first is *Selaugh*, a firm stony rock; the latter is *Tsur*, a strong or sharp rocke: he is saith hee, *My deliverer, my God, my strength in whom I will trust, my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.*

A horn

A horn signifieth *power and strength*, Psalm. 92. 11. and therefore they signifie the great Monarchs and Kings of the world, *Dan. 8. 21.* An high tower hath it's name in Hebrew *Misgah*, which is an exaltation; that is an high Tower or Fort, wherein men are protected from danger and invasion: and he addes, *my refuge*, that is, saving me from all wrong and violence of men: And this is that which Christ hath promised to his Sains, *never to leave them, nor forsake them*, Heb. 13. 5.

There are no lesse then five negatives in this place, to strengthen and confirm our faith in the truth of the promise: And it is, as if he should have said, I will in no wise, whatsoever come of it, at any time forsake thee, mine eye shall be still over thee, and I will watch over thee for good continually. So the Lord promisethto be with his people in the greatest danger, *when they passe through the water, and when they walke through the fire*, Isa. 43. 2. Fire and water are two most devouring Elements; good servants, but bad masters, as we say; and therefore here they are put for all other perillous and dangerous kinds: Christ will save and deliver his people from them all. We read, *Dan. 3. 25.* That the three children were cast into the fiery furnace: but what said the Tyrant? *I see foure* (saith hee) *and the fourth is like the Sonne of God.* And in all probability it was so, it being usuall under the Old Testament for Christ upon some weighty occasions to appeare in humane shape. Thus Christ will be with his people in the furnace of affliction, and either he will preserve them in, or deliver them out of trouble; hee will so sanctifie affliction, that it shall prove a very blessing unto them.

3. From

3. From the note of propriety, *my beloved is unto me*, &c. Observe,

That the Saints only have the right feeling and sense of Christs sweetnesse.

They only are redeemed and sanctified by Christ, they alone feele the free remission of sins, and reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ: from whence ariseth this sweet refreshing peace and spirituall joy in their souls. The men of the world doe smell the sweet savour of many earthly things, and doe abundantly delight in them; but this divine and spirituall sweetnesse of Christ they do not smell.

This is no great wonder neither; for let the sun shine never so bright, and yet hee that is blind cannot perceive it. So let him that is without sense of smelling come among sweet savours, yet he smelleth no sweetnesse at all: Thus Christ is preached abroad in the world, and he is as it were a box of precious ointment powred forth; but yet for all this, the men of the world are so stuffed with the stinking savours of carnall lusts, which seem more delightfome unto them, as that they cannot smell any spirituall sweetnesse in Christ at all: so that when the Saints are exceedingly moved and taken with the sweet savours of Christ, yet others are nothing taken with those spirituall savours and that because they savour not the things of God. Then the Saints only are perfumed with *Christs* sweetnesse, so that their hearts for love of him doe despise unclean lusts and carnall pleasures, aspiring unto the heavens in their soules, where Christ is, who is their happinesse, their joy, and their treasure, whom they fix, as it were, a bundle of sweet myrrhe between their breasts, and doe smell a sweet savour in his redemption and

and meditation, even as a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of Engedi. Thus much for the commendations of the Spouse concerning her Beloved.

V E R S. 15, 16, 17.

Behold, thou art faire my Love : behold thou art faire, thou hast doves eyes.
Behold, thou art faire, my beloved, yea, pleasant : also our bed is green.
The beams of our house are Cedar, and our rafters of fir.

Christ and his Church having already mutually commended each other : now again they do renew the praises one of another, and that more succinctly then before. For this commendations Christ beginneth, and the Church followeth after.

1. Christ commendeth his Spouse, *vers. 15.*

2. The Spouse praiseth her Beloved, *vers. 16.*

3. Wee have a conclusion of praise joyntly between them both, *vers. 17.*

First, Christ commendeth his Spouse : his Eulogie is laid down,

First, By way of preface or introduction ; and this is two-fold :

1. By a word of attention ; *Behold.*

2. By a love-title ; *my love.*

Secondly, we have Christs assertion of his Spouse, and that is double ; *thou art faire, thou art faire.*

Thirdly, this assertion is enlarged by a comparison ; *thou hast doves eyes.*

Or wee may take it for Christs commending his Spouse for her properties.

First,

First, for her beauty, as shee was made glorious in him, and without spot; *thou art faire, &c.*

Secondly, For her spirituall chastity; *thou hast dewey eyes.*

Behold, my love, thou art faire, &c.

It was the whole desire of the Church to be well favoured, comely, and beautifull in the eyes of Christ: now for Christ thus to accept of her, is all shee can wish or desire. A singular joy it must needs be unto her, to be assured, and made certain, that she is indeed made beautifull in his sight. And therefore the Lord doth pronounce her excellent beauty, which can hardly be uttered with any words, and therefore hee doth preface his speech with a note of attention, saying,

Echold, thou art faire, my love, &c.

En, ecce,
adverbium
demonstran-
di, usup-
tur in rebus
notabilibus.

The Scripture useth this word *behold*, when it would stir up the minds of men to consider some rare, some excellent or wonderfull matter: As, *Behold a virgin shall be with child, &c.* And, *behold the day of the Lord shall come.*

To *behold*, in it's proper signification, is to looke on a thing with our fleshly eyes; but it is used to signifie due consideration, or a due regard of a thing; as, *Behold therefore the beautifulnesse and severity of God*, Rom. II. 12.

Sometimes the word is taken by way of derision, as in Gen. 3. 22. where God saith concerning *Adam*, *behold the man is become as one of us*: but this is least of all meant in this place.

Again, the word *behold* is taken by way of assevera-
ration,

tion, to assure us of the truth of a thing. And thus it is used here; for the Church being sensible of her blacknesse and deformity in Verf. 5. Christ comforteth her against that deformity which shee saw in her selfe, by telling her that shee was the fairest among women, Ver. 8. but now to assure her of the truth and certainty thereof, he doth preface his commendations with this word of asseveration, saying, *Behold thou art faire, &c.*

Lastly, *Behold* is prefixed to such phrases, by which the Lord would raise up our thoughts to the highest pitch of attention and admiration, to quicken us against our dull and misgiving hearts. The Saints many times thinke worse of themselves, then happily Christ would have them, and they are hardly drawne to believe that Christ hath made them so glorious and so happy, as he hath done; now that Christ might raise the hearts of his people against such misgiving thoughts, he doth rouze and stir them up by this note of attention, *Behold, thou art faire, &c.*

So this word of attention, *Behold*, notes unto us three things.

First, how backward and slow of heart we are to believe the things of Christ, & how dull we are at the best; so that we alwayes stand in need of being quickned and rouzed up by such a word of attention as this, *Behold, &c.* Hence it is that the Apostle exhorts *Timothy to stir up the gift of God that was in him*, 2 Tim. 1. 6. where the word *stir up* signifieth to *stir up fire*, or to give life to fire; as fire burneth under ashes, and is revived, or re-kindled by stirring up. This notes unto us, that the gift of God is as it were a certaine flame kindled in our hearts; but our natures are as the ashes which are ready to cover and choak this fire in us, and the flesh, and

the Devill goe about to put it out, and therefore we on the contrary should labour as much as in us lies, to cherish and keep it burning. In this metaphor the Apostle seemeth to allude to the type of the Priests under the Law, who were to cherish the holy fire on the Altar, that it might not goe forth: thus our faith and other graces must be blowne and stirred up: and how ever we may have the graces of Christ in respect of the habirts of them, yet we should stir them up unto their acts, else they may lye dead in us, as fire covered with the ashes. Christ would raise our hearts from earthly things unto those that are heavenly, from worldly glory unto that which is divine, and from carnall joy unto spirituall delight. Christ had told the Church before that shee was beautifull, but least her dull and misgiuing heart should not beleive it, he adds, *Behold, thou art faire, &c.*

Secondly, It is a note of wonder and admiration, as *Behold a Virgin shall be with Child.* What greater wonder can there be, then for a Virgin to conceive and bring forth a Son? So here, *Behold thou art faire:* this must needs be a wonderfull thing that shee that was black and deformed, should be thus beautifull and fair, and that her naturall deformity should be cover'd with a supernaturall comelineffe; this is an admirable thing indeed, and well may it be prefaced with a note of admiration, *Behold thou art faire, &c.*

Thirdly, it importeth to us an assurance of our spirituall beaurty: for this word *Behold* is a note of asseveration, as I said before, to assure us of the truth of the thing. Our hearts are apt to misgive us, and we yunapt to beleive the bounty and goodnesse of Christ; we can hardly thinke he will bestow such glory and happiness.

ness upon us as he hath promised: now that he may take us off from this unbeleife, he doth declare it to us by this asseveration, *Behold thou art faire, &c.* Thus much for the word of attention, admiration, and asseveration: the next thing in the Preface followeth, which is his love title unto his Spouse.

My love.

The same word is used here, as was in Verf. 9. and it signifieth a *familiar*, a *fellow-friend*, a *companion*: it hath its name of feeding and conversing together. And thus Christ declareth the reason of that intercourse of love betweene him and his people, saying, *I have called you friends (not Servants) for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made knowne unto you:* And saith he, *you are my friends if you doe whatsoever I command you,* Joh. 15. 15. Now in that Christ doth so often give unto his Spouse, this sweet and lovely title of *friend* and *love*, and the like: it manifests unto us his sweet, everlasting, undying affection unto his Saints, by which he is one and the same to his Church for ever.

Hence Observe,

That Christs love unto his Saints is an everlasting and an undying love. Christs love is eternall and everlasting: a love that never decays or waxeth cold, like the stone *Albesios*, of which *Solinus* writes of, that being once hot, it can never be cooled againe. The love of Christ towards his Saints is like a Fountaine ever flowing, and never dried up, or like the facted fire which never went out. The love of Christ (whose gifts and calling are without repentance, *Rom. 11. 29.*) is an undying affection that never will decay. Hence saith he in *Jer. 31. 3.* *I have loved thee with an everlasting love.* And in another

Jul. Solin.
in Polyhist.
cap. 12.

ther place, *With everlasting kindnesse will I have mercy upon thee.* Though the Saints offend Christ often, yet he loves them still, he onely purges them and heales them of their spirituall maladies, which cannot be done without some smart; but he doth not a whit lessen or detract his love from them. Though his people come upon him every day for new supplies, yet his goodnesse is never wearied or tired out; yea, though thousands, millions of his Saints presse upon him at once, yet he hath for them all, and the Fountaine of his love and grace is never emptied. O what a whetstone should this be to our Spirits? and how should this flame of Christ's eternall love towards us kindle a fire of love in our hearts towards him againe? Nothing doth more concilliate and attract love, then love it selfe: it would be horrible ingratefull in us, not to spend and be spent for him that hath lov'd us so much as Christ hath done; certainly if love doe not draw us unto him nothing will. The acts of Christ's love are the cords wherewith he draws souls unto himselfe, *I drew them with cords of love,* saith he, *Hosea 11. 4.* And *I drew them with loving-kindnesse,* Jer. 31. 3. Nothing will draw us unto Christ effectually, if love will not. Thus much for the Preface; the Proposition followeth.

Thou art faire, thou art faire.

פֶּה
Pulcer, elegans, lenissimus, decorus fuit.

The word *Japhah*, signifies *faire* or *beautiful*, not onely in colour, but in comely proportion and elegancy, such as draweth love and liking, as you heard in Ver. 8. The Church is called *faire* by reason of the graces, and the spirituall beauty of *faith, hope, love, patience*, wherewith Christ hath beautified her.

The doubling of the word increaseth the signification,

tion, it expresseth the superlative degree, it is an usuall Hebraisme to expresse that which doth excell by the doubling of the word, as *faire, faire*, that is, most excellent and very faire, for it doth expresse the vehemency of the mind, when the Speech is so doubled. Sometime we use the same forme of Speech even among our selves, when we would most of all villifie one, we say, he is naught, he is naught, as *Solomon* saith of the buyer, *Prov. 20. 14.* In like manner, when we would expresse something most rare and excellent, we use to say, it is excellent, it is excellent. Even thus the Lord *Jesus* commendeth the beauty of his Church to be most rare, excellent, and transcendent, that which can hardly be uttered with any words. And thus *Christ* praiseth the excelling beauty of his Church, not onely to comfort her with all the members thereof, that neither the whole, nor the parts of the whole, should be discouraged with their blacknesse and deformity, but also to declare thereby, that shee is not onely faire but excellent, transcendent, and wonderfull faire and glorious in his sight.

Hence Observe,

That the Saints excell in beauty and are most amiable in Christ's sight. It must needs be so, for *Christ* is made unto them of *God*, *Wisdom*, *Righteousnesse*, *Sanctification*, and *Redemption*. *Wisdom* for covering their ignorance, *Righteousnesse* for bearing their iniquity, *Sanctification* for making them holy, *Redemption* for her full and absolute Salvation. Although the Church be black, and there be many deformities and spots in the Saints, while they are here, yet *Christ* beholdeth his people according to those comely graces and vertues of *faith*, *love*, *hope*, *patience*, and the like, wherewith he. himselfe hath

hath decked them: and he doth not so much regard their spots and deformities, because he hath by his sanctification and cleansing, *washed them all away, and made his Church glorious to himselfe, not having spot or wrinkle,* Ephes. 5. 26, 27. He will cleanse us, *by the washing of water, by the word:* it is a promise of free justification and sanctification by faith in Christ. And the Apostle John tells us, *That the blood of Christ washeth us from all sin,* 1 John 1. 7. That is, from the guilt of all sin, and also from the filth and staine of sin. And Paul in Tit. 2. 14. he hath *purified unto himselfe a peculiar people.* That is, he hath separated and consecrated a people holy for himselfe, *zealous of good works.* And Christ's blood *purgeth our Consciences,* Heb. 9. 14. Now in that Christ hath washed and purged his Church, he hath demonstrated the greatest love and liking unto her; according to this we have an expression in Revel. 1. 5. where the Apostle saith, *that he hath loved us, and washed us in his blood.* The greatest demonstration of his love was, in that he shed his blood for us, for the cleansing of us from our sins. Thus the Church is made faire and beautifull in the sight of Christ, even by the washings of his blood.

Againe, shee is beautifull in respect of all those graces that Christ hath endowed her withall, as *faith, love, hope, patience,* and the like. In Ezek. 28. 7. the Prophet mentioneth the *beauty of wisdom.* And when the Church shall obey Christs voice, and forsake her owne naturall corruptions, it is said, *he taketh delight in her beauty.* *Hearken O Daughter, and consider, and incline thine eare: forget also thine owne people, and thy Fathers house, so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty, &c.* Psa. 45. 10, 11. Thus much for the proposition, the comparison follows.

Then

Thou hast Doves eyes.

Concerning the comparison betweene the Churches eyes and Doves, let us inquire, first, what these eyes be, secondly, wherein they be compared to Doves.

The Hebrew word that signifies an eye, doth also signify a *Well* or *Fountaine*, because the eye is of a watery constitution, and because it is the greatest inlet to evill of all the Members of the body, and it being the cause of much sin and misery, therefore God hath placed in it the greatest tokens of sorrow and lamentation.

The eyes of the Saints may be referred to these three sorts: they be *Corporall*, *Mentall*, or *Personall*.

1. The corporall or bodily eyes be externall instruments seated in the head (as the windows of nature) having lids for drawing up, or letting downe, according as the inward sense instructeth. Unbridled eyes are said to be full of adultery, 2 Pet. 2. 14. And eyes be- holding strange women, Prov. 23. 33. The eye is an inlet to filthinesse and uncleannesse: hence it is Job saith, he had made a Covenant with his eyes, Job 31. 1.

2. For mentall eyes, they be the inward senses of nature, as *Imagination*, *Phantasie*, *Conceit*, &c. all these have their seat chiefly in the head, commanding all the externall senses as they please. All which senses are comprehended in the word *Minde*: now as for the naturall man he mindeth earthly things, Phil. 3. 19. And therefore the Apostle enjoineth the Saints to be renewed in the Spirit of their mind, Ephes. 4. 23. and that according to the Creation that is in righteousnesse and true holinesse. The mind is the eye of the soule, so that he means nor a bodily change, but a change of the faculties of the soul, and that of the highest faculty, namely, the

*Oculus, re-
synecdochē
aspectus,
quā aspectus
est in oculo.
Per meta-
phoram sons
ex quo tan-
quam ex o-
culo a qua
estruit.*

the understanding and reason, by which also the Spirit of God doth work upon all the inferiour faculties.

3. For personall eyes, they be such as be imputed to be such in respect of their Office and place: and such are the Ministers of Christ, those that have received some excellent gifts from the Lord: as in 1 Cor. 12. 12. 17. *If the whole body were an eye (saith the Apostle) where were the hearing?* The Apostle speaks this, lest any should be discontented at the meannesse of their gifts in comparison of others, and also sheweth them, that if it were so as they desired, to wit, that all should be quall one to another in the gifts of the Spirit, there would be a destruction of the whole body: for it could not be a body unlesse it were made of many Members knit together, and diverse one from another. Now Magistrates they should be eyes to the Common-wealth: and for such as the Lord hath cloathed with his Spirit for to administer the word of truth, such are as eyes to the Church of Christ.

Now I might come to examine what Doves be, to whom these eyes are resembled: they are Birds well knowne amongst us, and therefore need no personall description. A Bird of a right simple carriage, and a feeder of the best graine, whose Song is mourning, very fruitfull, and one that constantly returneth to her own home, and very faithfull unto her mate.

Now here Christ commendeth the Church for her eyes, because if they be faire, they doe easily cover the spots and deformities of the rest of the members of the body. He seteth forth the simplicity, sincerity, humility, meeknesse, but especially the spirituall chastity of the Church, setting forth not only her inward affection, but also her outward appearance, so that the Church hath

nunchast looks or countenances (of which we read somewhat in *Psal.* 44. 17, 18. 20.) but contenteth her selfe with Christ her only Husband, and even as the Dove, when she hath chosen a match, shee keepeth her selfe unto him only, and looketh not upon any other, according as the Philosophers write and affirme of them.

Hence observe,

That the spirituall chastity of the Saints is very beautifull and pleasing thing in the eyes of Christ.

The Lord doth not onely commend the beauty of his Church, but also praiseth her spirituall chastity, for indeed her spirituall chastity is a great part of her spirituall beauty. The chastity of Virgins is much to be commended, and a thing requisite for all Christians to possesse their vessell in holinesse. Thus also is the spirituall chastity of the Church very commendable and comely, when the Church can be said to be a chaste and pure virgin given up unto Christ. Now as there is the filthinesse and uncleannesse of the flesh; so there is a spirituall whoredome often complained of, and condemned in Scripture: Then as in marriage, the Bride-groome doth much delight in the chastity and simplicity of his Bride: so the faithfull soule, being married unto Christ, there is chastity required, a thing delightfull in the eyes of Christ.

The Church of Christ then must not looke after others, or commit spirituall whoredome with any; but shee must keep her faith, hope, love and affection wholly and entirely towards him alone.

To this purpose tends that of the Prophet, when he prophesies of a remnant that should forsake idolatry, he saith: *At that day shall a man looke to his maker, and*

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his eyes shall have respect to the holy one of Israel: and he shall not looke to the Altars, the work of mens hands; neither shall respect that which his fingers have made, either the groves or the images, Isa. 17. 7, 8. In that he nameth groves & images, he hath respect to the diverse sorts of places which they had to worship their Idols: their groves and shady places were such as they used in the heate of summer; and their sunne-images, set in sun-shiny places, which they made use of in colder weather: by these two therefore, are all sorts of Idols and idolatrous services designed; but the Prophet tells of a remnant, that should escape all these, and should look to the holy one alone.

They then that embrace the doctrines and inventions of men, worshipping stocks and stones, they commit abominable whoredome, according as the word of God chargeth them. Such as imbrace this world, be called adulterers and adulteresses, Jam. 4. 4. And covetousnesse which is idolatry, Col. 3. 5. And such as did forsake the Lord, their eyes went after their idols, Ezek. 20. 24. And such are called eyes, beholding strange women, Prov. 23. 33. Those then that will be faithfull unto the Lord, and be beautifull in his sight, must have doves eyes: they must with a single eye of faith looke upon Jesus Christ, and love him, and stay upon him alone, and not upon the world, or upon riches, honours, pleasures, or any worldly contentment whatsoever.

The corporall eye must be like the Dove for simplicity and chastity: this eye (as our Savi. ur teacheth, Matth. 6.) is the light of the body: and without the eye there is nothing but darknes in the bodie: it is the window of the bodie, which, if it be not carefully watched,

watched, will be a great inlet of evil. The mentall eye, which is the eye of the soule, must also assimilate the Dove in all simplicity: and so much the rather, must the mind be simple, chaste, innocent, because it is the light of the soule, and it sitteth at the soules helme, steering all the outward senses, according as it's selfe pleaserh. And for those that are personall eyes, the Ministers of the Gospel, they should prepare the Church for one Husband, even to present it as a pure Virgin unto Christ, 2 Cor. 11. 2. To conclude, the eye of the soule is the light of the soule, and that is faith; the delight then that Christ taketh in his Saints, is the beauty of this eye of faith; and this beauty shall never decay, but wax more and more beautiful. So much for the commendations given by Christ: now followeth the like praise which his church returneth to him again.

V E R S. 16.

Behold thou art faire, my beloved, yea, pleasant: also our bed is greene.

THe Church doth expresse the great liking she hath of Christ's beauty; and thus she doth,

1. By returning back his praise, saying, *Thou art faire, &c.*

2. By amplifying and enlarging his beauty, or by adding to his praise; by his amiable delectableness, whereby he enflameth her heart, *yea, pleasant.*

As for the last clause: *Also our bed is greene*, I think it is to be joyned with the last verse, being a part of that joynt praise which belongeth both to Christ and his Church, unto which I shall refer it.

Behold thou art faire, &c.

The Church returneth the word *Japhet, faire*, unto Christ; as if she should say; yea, rather thou art faire, and whatsoever beauty I have, I have it from thee: I am *Japhet, faire*, but it is because thou art *Japhet, faire*, my fairnesse springs out of thee, who art the fountain of spirituall beauty, and hast not the Spirit by measure, *John 3. 34.* But in such fulnesse, that of thy fulnesse wee have all received, and grace for grace, *John 1. 16.* Christ is the fairest of all the sonnes of Adam, *Psal. 45. 2.* From whom the Church receiveth all her fairnesse and beauty, so that shee doth not assume the praise unto her selfe, but giveth back to her Beloved, from whom shee had received it, and unto whom it was due, according to the practice of the Church, in *Psalms 115. 1.* Not unto us O LORD, but to thy Name let bee the praise. Shee addeth the praise of his amiable delectableness.

Yea, pleasant.

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Jucundus
amabilis,
decorus,
gratus fuit.

The Church addeth another Epithite of love, saying; thou art *Nagnim*, turned of the Greeks *opsis*, which implyeth the very spring or flowre of beauty, a tearm far before the former, which signifies pleasant, amiable, delightfull, beautifull. Now the Covenant which the Lord made with his people in *Zeck. 11. 10.* is called beauty, or pleasantnesse. And *Moses* desired, that the beauty of the Lord might be upon them in the performance of his Covenant; *Psal. 90. 17.* And *David* desireth to remain in the house of the Lord all the dayes of his life, that hee might behold the pleasantnesse of the Lord, *Psal. 27. 4.*

Now.

Now all these things were fulfilled and compleated in Christ, who by his heavenly Doctrines, and words of grace and consolation to his people, doth become sweet as the *honey comb* unto them, and very pleasant. All Christ's administrations of the covenant of grace are his staves of beauty and pleasantness. From this high commendations of the Church given unto *Christ*, Observe,

First, *That Christ is the fountain of all that spirituall beauty of the Saints.*

As Christ had commended her graces, so shee praiseth him for the cause of those graces. For it is cleare, that the Church hath all her beauty & ornaments from him, it is he that washeth her, and makes her glorious, *Ephes. 5. 26.* It is most true, that the beauty and glory of the heavenly new *Jerusalem* is exceeding great, as it is set forth, *Revel. 21.* Yet the glory of the Bridegroom Jesus Christ far exceeds in beauty, even as much as the Ocean doth the lesser streams, for he is the fountaine of all glory and beauty. Hence it is, the Church returneth this praise unto him; for he indeed is fair and comely. Who can set forth the glory of Christ? who can describe his beauty and comeliness? Not the carnall men of the world, in whose account Christ had no forme or comeliness upon him, *Isa. 53. 3.* And in respect of his depressed condition in the world, and by reason of his deep sufferings, *his visage was marred more then any man, and his forme more then the sonnes of men, Isa. 52. 14.* Therefore hee was rejected of men, *Isa. 53. 3.* Hee was scarce deemed worthy the name of a man; hee had no respect or estimation in the eyes of the men of the world: these see not his beauty, and therefore praise him

not;

not : but the Saints doe glory in Christ's beauty and comelineffe, because they see him to be the fountaine of glory and praife.

Secondly, Observe,

The Church doth not so much glory in her owne beauty, as shee doth in the glory of Christ.

The Saints doe indeed glory in their owne beauty; but yet so, as they know they have all from Christ, and so indeed they glory onely in him, according to that in 1 Cor. 1. 31. *If any man glory, let him glory in the Lord.* Therefore Christ is made all things of God unto us, as *wisedome, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*: That *no flesh should glory in his presence.* Thus the Apostle attributeth the glory of his life unto Christ, *Gal. 2. 20. I live (saith hee) yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the sonne of God, who loved me, and gave himselfe for mee.* So that wee derive all our life, beauty, and comelineffe from Christ, so that wee cannot so much glory in our owne beauty, as in the comelineffe of Christ, the fountain of all spirituall beauty.

Thirdly, observe,

That Christ is exceeding delectable and well-pleasing unto his Church, in all his administrations of grace unto them.

Christ's words are full of grace, and therefore sweeter then the honey-comb: the performance of his Covenant is beautifull and pleasant. And indeed Christ is the very spring or fountain of pleasantnesse and beauty: for there is in him a greater measure of beauty then is powred upon the Church, as appeareth by the Churches adding another Epithite of love, saying,

yea, pleasant, an expreffion far beyond the former. And this falleth out, because he hath received the Spirit above measure, we in measure; hee had the Spirit as a fountaine, we as the streams: hee had all glory and beauty as the sun; we receive of his divine beams, as the bright rayes of his glory darted down upon us. Thus much for the Spoufes commendations of her beloved, either of them having praised each other in their severall speeches; in the next place they do both joyntly rejoyce and glory together.

Tea, our bed is Greene.

VERS. 17. *The beames of our house are Cedar, and our rafters of Firre.*

This joynt speech of Christ and his Church contains a glorious declaration.

1. The place of conception, or the increase of the children of the Church, in these words, *our bed is green.*

2. The place of spirituall education and instruction, that is, *in the houses.*

Which houses of Christ are set forth by their adjuncts, *Beames and Galleries.*

These beams and galleries are set forth by the matter they were of: the *beames* were Cedar, the *galleries* were Firre.

Our bed is Greene.

The Hebrew word signifies a *bed*, or *Eed-steed*: Beds were used to rest and sleep on, as in *Psal.* 132. 3, 4. And sometimes they did use to sit upon beds at their Feasts and Banquets, as in *Esth.* 1. 5, 6. For it was a custome in those eastern Countreys, to use beds in stead of tables, that so soone as they had eaten, they might present-

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presently goe to sleep: whence it is, that the Prophet prophesieth against those that lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the Flocke, &c. Amos 6. 4. See also Ezek. 23. 41. And John 13. 25. Again, the high Altar, and places of offering sacrifice are called beds, Isa. 57. 7. Upon a lofty & high mountain hast thou set thy bed, even thither wentest thou up to offer sacrifice, saith the Lord by the Prophet: that is, thine Altars hast thou set up aloft in open view, like an impudent Strumpet, that sheweth her filthinesse in the sight of others, as wee read in Ezek. 16. 24, 25.

Our bed is greene.

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רענ
Viresc. etc.

The word translated *greene*, signifies to flourish, to be fruitfull, and to waxe strong, and of force: it is not so much meant of colour, as of budding forth and flourishing, like trees and plants in the time of spring, when things are green and flourishing.

The word is often applyed unto men, setting forth their flourishing and prosperous estate: hence it is said in Job 15. 32. That a wicked man shall be cut off before his time, and his branch shall not be greene. That is, his flourishing estate and condition shall end before his time; for he shall not so exalt himself in prosperity, as he had thought to have done. And David speaking of the prosperity of the wicked, saith, I have seene the wicked in great power, and spreading himselfe like a green bay tree, Psal. 37. 35. That is, fresh and flourishing, as Nebuchadnezzar said, I was at rest in my house, and greene (or flourishing) in my Palace. And David speaking of his prosperity, likeneth himselfe to a green, or flourishing olive-tree in the house of God, Pf. 52. 8.

Now

Now by this comparison, or similitude of a bed, by which the Church became so flourishing and fruitfull; we may understand,

1. The flourishing, fruitfull, increasing condition of the Saints, who shall *bring forth fruit in old age, they shall be fat and greene (or flourishing)* Psal. 92. 14. That is, they sprout or grow up in stature and fruitfullnesse, through the blessing of God, and the increasings of his grace, in whose house they are planted, according to that of the Apostle in 1 Cor. 3. 6. *I have planted, Apollo watered, but God giveth the increase. The Saints are fruitfull in every good worke, and increasing in the knowledge of God,* Col. 1. 6. 10. or,

2. We may understand it of the spirituall increase of the faithfull, which are begotten by the seed of the word: Christ by the power of his word and Spirit sowerth the seed of his word, the Saints as the ground, receive the seed into the midst of their hearts, by which means they as spirituall Sons and Daughters are begotten unto Christ. Thus we have it in Psal. 45. 16. *In stead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make Princes in all the Earth.* This is meant of the succeeding Christians, that by the immortall seed of the word are begotten to Christ and his Church, he being their Father, Isa. 9. 6. And so is that heavenly Jerusalem, which seeketh her salvation, not by the first Covenant of the Law, but by the second of the Gospell, which is said to be above, because it hath its Originall from Heaven: There is called *the Mother of us all*, Gal. 4. 26. For as *Sara* was the Mother of *Isaac*, the true and proper Heir of his Father *Abraham*; so is this Heavenly Jerusalem, to wit, the Church of Christ, the mother of all the faith-
I i full,

full, who are Heirs of the Kingdome of Christ. We may take either, or both of these Interpretations. Now according to the first, if we take the meaning of these words for the fruitfull and increasing condition of the Saints in the knowledge of God, and in the graces of his Spirit: Observe,

First, *That the Saints become flourishing and fruitfull by the communion they have with Jesus Christ.* Hence it is the Apostle prays that the Colossians might be fruitfull in every good worke, and increasing in the knowledge of God. Unto this are all the Saints exhorted, *Ephes. 4.*

15. But speaking the truth in love (saith the Apostle) that yee may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ. The Apostle speaks of the spirituall growth of the whole body of Christ, and every Member thereof, who were to beare an earnest affection to the truth, whereby they might grow in Christ, for he quickneth and cherisheth his Church, which consisteth of diverse Members, and gives unto each of them a suitable measure and proportion; and by this effectuall working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of it selfe in love, ver. 16. Now we must know, that this spirituall growth doth not flow from any principle of nature, but it is Christ that ministreth vigour and strength above nature. For which observe the phrase in *Psal. 92. 14.* speaking of the righteous, saith, *He shall bring forth fruit in old age:* In the Originall it is, in graynesse, or hary age. Now in old age, when naturall strength is decayed, none can be fruitfull without a supernaturall supply of strength and vigour. Hence it is, that *David* prayeth unto the Lord, saying, *Cast me not off in the time of old age, forsake*

me not when my strength faileth, now also when I am old and gray-beaded, O God forsake me not, untill I have shewed thy strength unto this Generation, & thy power to every one that is to come, Psal. 71. 9, 18. It is said of Sara, that shee received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child, when shee was past age: And he (to wit Abraham) as good as dead, &c. Heb. 11. 11, 12. So are the Saints, as it were, past age, and dead by nature, therefore they must (as Sara) receive strength from Christ to conceive and bring forth the fruits of the Spirit.

Secondly, if we understand the words of the spirituall increase of the Saints, begotten unto Christ by the seed of the word: Observe,

That multitudes of Children are borne unto Christ, which are begotten by the immortall seed of the word. For by this phrase *Our bed is greene*, noteth unto us the fertility of Children (to wit of Sons and Daughters) arising from the womb of the Church, especially of the Gentiles. The Evangelicall Prophet seeing this, it caused him to cry out in this wile. *The desolate hath more Children then the married wife.* And because of the multitudes that should come in and imbrace Christ, he addeth, *Enlarge the place of thy Tents, and let them stretch forth the Curtaines of thy habitations, &c.* Isa. 54. 1, 2. The Prophet speaks as if so many should come in to Christ, that she should seeme to want roome to receive them; and therefore bids her stretch forth her curtaines, alluding to the Tents in which they dwelt. And in Chap. 66. 8. he crieth out by way of admiration, *Who hath heard such a thing? shall the Earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a Nation be borne at once? for as soone as Zion travailed, shee brought forth her children.* By

this the Prophet doth intimate the multitudes of those that should suddenly be borne a new, and begotten unto Christ by the publication of the Gospell, which was figured out by those multitudes that returned on a suddaine from *Babylon*, as if a whole Nation had been borne in one day. This was the promise that the Lord made to *Abraham*, and it is not to be limited to his Children after the flesh, but to his Children of the promise, that his seed should be as the *stars*, and as the *dust* for multitude, *Gen.* 28. 14. And at the first promulgation of the Gospell, there were *daily added unto the Church*, *Acts* 2. 47. And the *Saviour of the Gospell* was manifest in every place, *2 Cor.* 2. 14. Hence it was that the Beleivers after Christs ascension were called *πλείθος τῶν πιστευόντων* *The multitude of them that believed*. And it was Prophecyed that *Ten men shall take hold out of all Languages of the Nations, of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, we will goe with you, for we have heard that God is with you*, *Zech.* 8. 20. 23. That is, many of the Nations should imbrace the truth, which in former times were restrained within the Nation of the Jewes, according to the Prophecy in *Genes.* 9. 27. where it is said, *God shall enlarge Japhet, and he shall dwell in the Tents of Shem, &c.* But we must not make *universality* the note of the Saints, for *universality* is common to Antichristian Idolatours. The whore was to set upon many waters, which were peoples, and multitudes, and Nations, and tongues: and the Kings of the earth were to be made drunk with the wine of her fornications, and all the Nations to drinke thereof, *Revel.* 17. 15. 18. 3. Therefore we must understand the Church of Christ to be numerous in herselfe, and not comparatively, setting her with the world;

world; but to be many comparatively with the old Church of the Jewes, for *more are the children of the desolate then of the married wife*, Isa. 54. 1.

To conclide, this spirituall birth is that which concerns both Christ and his Church; for the union of Christ and his Church is the cause of such an everlasting greenesse and fruitfullnesse. Christ is as the *Agent*, and the Church in her senses and affections is the patient: Christ soweth the seed of his word, and the Church as the ground receiveth the seed, that so between them are many spirituall Sons and daughters begotten unto God. Hence they doe mutually and jointly rejoyce and sing at the Churches enlargement. It is not said *My bed*, but *our bed*, thereby shewing that it concerns them both. The heavenly procreation of many spirituall Sons and daughters, and the fresh and flourishing springing of those goodly plants which are thus borne of the Spirit of God, is matter of joy and rejoycing both to Christ and his Church.

Thus much for the place of conception, now followeth the place of spirituall education.

Verf. 17. *The beams of our house are Cedar, the Rafter is of Firr.*

Here is commended their house which they dwell in; and the commendations is from the matter which it is built of: which is expressed by two adjuncts, *beams*, and *galleries*.

The beams of our house.

The word Translated *beams*, signifies *beams* or *Rafter*, which beare up the roote of the house, or any

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timber or stone, whereof any such prop is made. *Beams* are for strength and sustentation of the house: by these *beams* may be meant those that are strong; as *James, Cephas, and John*, are called *Pillars of the Church*, Gal. 2. 9. because these by the preaching of the doctrine of faith, did, as it were, stay and uphold the Churches of Christ.

Of our house.

Our house) or *the houses of us*, for the Catholick body is distinguished into sundry particular Congregations, or Churches, in every of which (as in sundry Nurseries) the Saints are brought up and Nursed. The Church is called *the house of God*, 1 Tim. 3. 15. which is Interpreted to be *the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth*. And so the faithfull are called, *the house of God*, Heb. 3. 6. But what is this Palace? It cannot be so properly meant of Heaven, in which the Saints shall dwell for ever. but rather of an house while they are yet in this World, and this house is the Church of Christ, she is the Temple of the living God. Every faithfull soule is the habitation of Christ; and hence it is, that the Psalmist calls upon men to open the doors of their heart to receive Christ: *Lift up your heads yee gates, and be ye lift up yee everlasting doers, and the King of glory shall come in* Psal. 24.

The beams of our house are Cedar.

The beams of this spirituall house are set forth by the matter they were of, they were of Cedar: Cedar is a Tree very common in Mount Lebanon; and (as some say) like unto Juniper, or rather to Cypres for lease; but

but for the Tree it selfe, it is tall, and strong, and the wood of permanent nature, and of a very sweet smell, and it rotteth not, nor admitting any worme. Now the Saints (who are the *beams, rafters, and materialls* of this house) are compared to Cedars, in *Psa. 92. 13.* And Balaam likeneth the *Tabernacles of Israel* unto Cedar trees beside the waters, for goodlinesse, *Numb. 24. 5, 6.* This wood was used in *Solomon's Temple*, *1 K. 6. 36.* And he made Cedars like Sycamore Trees, which are in the vale, for abundance, *1 Kings 10. 27.* Prefiguring the Saints of whom the spirituall Temple of the Lord was to be built: the Saints are as living stones, put into the edifice or building of Christs spirituall Temple. Thus is commended the matter of the beams of this house, wherein is set forth the stability and strength of this house or houses. Now followeth the setting forth of the excellency and statelinesse of this house.

And the rafters (or galleries) of firr.

Rafters) or Galleries, as the word borrowed from *running* intendeth: Galleries were certaine walking places, which were built on the tops of houses. Now in such Galleries as these, men were wont to walke and converse together: So here, these Galleries in Christs house may signifie the sweet conversing the Saints have with Christ, in the communication of all his graces. These Galleries are set forth by the matter they were of.

Of Fir

Our Translation saith *offir*, some others *Cypres*; the Hebrew *Brothim* (whose singular for the forme of its

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Lib. 12.
Cap. 17.

its Character, may be *Brut*) is turned by the Latine word *Bruta*, which was a Tree (as *Pliny* recordeth) like to a broad Cypres tree, with whitish boughs, of excellent sweet savour, much like unto Cedar. This sets out unto us the excellency of Christs Galleries, wherein he doth sweetly converse with his people, and wherein his people doe contemplate of divine things.

These Cedars and Brutine trees, may both be applied unto the persons of the Saints; and also unto the doctrine of faith; wherewith the Church is built upon Christ the chief corner Stone, as in *1 Cor.* 3. 9, 10, 11, 12, where the Apostle saith, *No man can lay any other foundation then that which is laid, which is Christ: Now* (saith he) *if any man build upon this foundation, Gold, silver, precious stones, &c.* That is meant of the Saints, who are the super-structure, built upon Christ the foundation: thus was the building of the new Jerusalem, *whose twelve gates were of pearles, and the street of the city was pure gold, Rev.* 21. 21. Now all these similitudes doe set forth those holy persons and graces wherewith the Church should be adorned: all those things, signified by the houses of Cedar, and by the Galleries of fir, are strong and firme and very redolent and savory, unto the comfort of the Saints, and the glory of Christ.

In the Verse before Christ and his Church sung the prayse of their Bed, here they sing the praise of their Houses.

Hence Observe,

1. *That the Saints are Christs house.*

They are called, *the house of God*, *1 Pet.* 4. 17. and the *Temple of God*, *2 Cor.* 6. 16. Heaven is his house, where he manifesteth his glory, and the world is his house, where

where he manifesteth his power and wisdom; but the Saints are his house, where he manifesteth his especial grace and favour. The Lord *dwells with the humble spirit*, Isa. 57. 15. That is, he is present with them, to cheare and comfort them with his grace and spirit.

Now the Lord maketh use of the Saints as men doe of their houses.

1. Men use to abide and be resident in their houses; a house is a place of residence. So Christ is alway present with his Saints, by his Spirit unto the end of the world, *Matth. 28. 18. And lo (saith he) I am with you unto the end.*

2. Men doe refresh themselves by eating, and drinking, and the like, in houses: thus Christ is said to feast and sup with his Saints, *Revel. 3. 20.* Christ doth converse familiarly, chearfully, and comfortably with them, as friends use to Feast and make merry one with another.

3. Men doe take great delight and contentment in their houses, as being a part of their worldly excellency: So Christ taketh great contentment and delight in his Saints: *The upright are his delight*, Prov. 11. 20.

4. Men lay up their greatest treasures and their most precious Jewells in their houses: So doth Christ, he comes into the soule (his house) to bestow his Jewells, and to spread his treasures of grace there; he makes *the spirit of glory to rest upon his Saints*, 1 Pet. 4. 14.

Now as the glory of Christs house is set forth, so also is the glory of the *beams or rafters* thereof commended unto us. You heard that these beams were applied to the persons of the Saints, wherewithall the house of Christ is builded. Christ is the Foundation, and the

Saints are the super-structure put into the building. This is that the Apostle tells us, 1 Pet. 2. 4, 5. *To whom comming (that is unto Christ) as unto a living stone: yee also (saith he) as lively stones are built up as spirituall house, an holy Priest-hood, to offer up spirituall sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.* So Gods house is built of Saints, of lively stones, such as have received life from him, & this house is Gods dwelling place, where he communicates both grace and glory. And it is called a spirituall house, because it is built up by the Spirit of God.

Now as Christs house is commended by the beams thereof; so the beams or rafters, are set forth by the matter they are of, and that is Cedar.

Hence note,

That the Saints (who are the materialls of Christs house) in respect of their excellency, are called Cedars. Cedar was used in Solomons Temple, 1 Kings 6. 36. and did prefigure the Saints under the Gospell Church. And the Saints are compared to Cedars. Psal. 92. 13. Now the Saints may well be compared to Cedars, in diverse respects, but especially in these that follow.

1. The Cedar is a very tall and high tree, all other trees are but shrubs unto them. So are the Saints, in their gifts, in their graces, in their priviledges and attainments; they are above the men of the world, and therefore they are taller then the people by the head and shoulders, as it was said of King Saul. Solomon confirmeth this and faith, *The righteous is more excellent then his Neighbour.* Prov. 12. 26.

2. Cedar is a tree of incomparable strength: So the Saints are made stronger then their enemies; they are so strong that they are become more then Conquerours, through

through him that loved them.

3. Cedar is a very durable wood: So the Saints are such as endure to the end; they stand fast in the faith of Jesus Christ, and are not moved away from the hope that is in them. Though they walke in the midst of temptations, yet they never give over their hope: *Though thou kill me (saith Job) yet will I trust in thee.* And though the Saints walk in darknesse and have no light at all, yet they will trust in the name of the Lord, and stay themselves upon their God, Isa. 50. 10.

4. Cedar rotteth not; no more doe the Saints decay in their graces. Indeed there may be some spirituall languour or deadnes befall them, by reason of some desertion or temptation, and the like: but for the graces of the Spirit in them, they never perish nor decay.

5. Cedar, (as some report) will not admit of any worme; no more will the Saints admit of any worm of covetousnesse, or any worldly thing to consume them, or eat them out.

6. Cedar is very sweet of smell; So the Saints are odoriferous and redolent of savour, in all their Sacrifices to God by Jesus Christ: and to man in their lives and conversations.

7. Cedar (as some say) will putrifie and kill things that are living, and restore and conserve that which is rotten: So the Saints have received power and grace from Christ to kill and mortifie all their lusts, and have also received power from him to live and revive, although dead before. This Christ himselfe tells us, John 5. 25. *The dead shall heare the voyce of the son of God, and they shall live.*

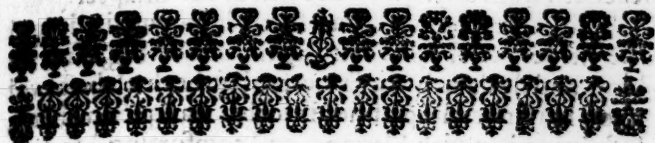
8. And lastly, the Cedar is more fruitfull in age then before; and for this cause are the Saints compared un-

to Cedars, in that as Cedars they grow from perfection to perfection, bearing most fruit in their age: as it is in *Psal. 92. 14.* a Christian is a Cedar, set in Christ the chiefe Cedar, he is a plant that grows in him, he hath eternall root, and therefore he flourisheth eternally.

Lastly, from the Galleries of converse and contemplation: Observe, *That Christ doth sweetly converse with his people, in his Galleries of contemplations.* Galleries are for walking, and walking for converse: Christ hath his Galleries where he doth converse with his Saints. Now it is by faith we must ascend up into these Galleries, and being there, we may with *Abraham* see Christs day afar off, and rejoyce. It is in these Galleries, where we may, with *Jacob*, see a Vision of *Angells ascending and descending upon the Son of man.* Here is that Mount that with *Moses* we may see all *Canaan* before we come there: and with *Peter, James, and John*, we may see Christ in excellent and transcendent glory. In these Galleries it is that Christ reveals such glorious secrets unto his people, which are impossible to be uttered; as he did unto *Paul* in his rapture, *2 Cor. 12. 4.* *I heard things, (saith the Apostle) which is not lawfull (or is impossible) for a man to utter.* That is, none but God himselfe could reveale such things unto me.

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αγγελίας.

In a word, Christ doth take the soul into these Galleries, and sheweth it all the glory, excellency, riches, and glory of heaven, and doth also, to the unspeakable comfort of his Saints, assure them of the fruition and enjoyment of all these things. Thus much for the first Chapter.



CANTICLES.

CHAPTER II.

VERS. 1, 2.

*I am the rose of Sharon, and the Lilie of the Valleys.
As the Lilie among thornes, so is my love among the
daughters.*



THIS Song is called the Song of Songs
(as you heard from the Title of it)
not onely from its excellency, but al-
so (as some suppose) because it doth
containe in it diuerse Songs: If so,
then we have finished one Song in the
former Chapter, in which we left

Christ and his Church in the Galleries of contemplati-
on. In that former Chapter, the Church began the
Song, and both Christ and she did joyntly conclude it.

In this Chapter are two parts.

In the first part the Bridegroom Christ commen-
deth himselfe and his Spouse, and this is contained in
the two first Verses of this Chapter.

In the second part the Bride praiseth the Bride-
groom, reciteth his benefits to wards her, and earnest-
ly desireth his continuall presence and favour, and this
reacheth

reacheth from *vers. 3.* to the end of the Chapter.

The Bridegroom setteth forth her own dignity and the Brides, *vers. 1, 2.* She again answering, praiseth him, and declareth the favours that he hath bestowed upon her, in leading of her into his Banqueting house, sustaining her with Flagons, and comforting her with apples, even when she was ready to faint, *Vers. 3, 4, 5, 6.* Afterward she declareth the coming of the Bridegroom unto her, his calling, and making large promises unto her, from the 7. *Vers.* unto the 13. And therefore she not onely rejoyceth in his communion, but desireth also his presence untill all his promises be fullfilled, from *vers. 14.* unto the end of the Chapter.

Vers. 1. I am the rose of Sharon, and the Lillie of the Valleys.

In this Verse we have Messiah's declaration of his owne excellency, and this is done by way of comparison.

1. His commendations are held out to us under the resemblance of a rose: which rose is set forth by a certaine peculiar Field where it grew, which from the Originall appeareth to be *Sharon.* *I am the rose of Sharon.*

2. He doth assimilate himselfe to the precious Lillie, which Lillie also is commended by the fertility of the place where it grew; to wit, in the *Valleys,* or the low and moist places of the Earth. *And the Lillie of the Valleys.*

I am the rose of Sharon, &c.

388 The Pronoun (*Ani*) which signifieth in our tongue *I,* is common both to man or woman; as *I* man, or *I* woman, so it cannot be decided by the forme of Speech, whither

whither Christ or his Church uttered these words : hence it is thought of some to be the speech of Christ : Of others, to be spoken by the Church : It is most true, that Christ and his Church are both of them sweet, fair, comely, and beautifull ; yea, so exceeding sweet and beautifull, that all the sweetest Roses, and whitest lilies in the world, are not comparable unto them. If Christ be called the *Rose* and the *Lihe*, it is most true, he is so, in respect of the excellency of his graces in himselfe, which he doth most freely communicate with his Saints. And if the Church be compared unto them ; it is a very fit comparison, whereby her graces received from Christ may be shewn forth, wherein she is most lovely and pleasant, for sweet odour and beauty, according to that promise made in *Hos. 14. 5. 7.* *I will be as the dew upon Israel, and he shall grow as the lillie : and they shall revive as the Corne, and grow as the Vine, the sent thereof shall be as the Wine of Lebanon.* He means that the knowledge of him and his doctrine, and the receiving of his graces shall be very pleasing and delightfull unto his people, like unto excellent wine.

But I take these to be the words of the Bridegroom commending himselfe for his most excellent sweet vertue, testified to all, but especially to his Church by communicating his grace and spirit unto her. The Church doth not speake this of her selfe, for then she should commend her selfe, which is not meet. The Apostle inveighs against false praisers, *2 Cor. 10. 12.* *We dare not (saith he) make our selves of the number, or compare our selves with some that commend themselves.* And in another place he speaks home to this purpose, *No man (saith he) liveth to himselfe, Rom. 14. 7.* That is, none ought to live unto himselfe ; yea, even Christ himselfe relating

relating to himselfe as a meer man, saith, *That his witness is not true if he beare witness of himselfe*, John 5. 31. But yet in another place relating to himselfe as mediator, as God and man in one person, and one with the Father, he spake cleane contrary to this: *Though I doe beare record of my selfe* (saith he) *yet my record is true*, John 8. 14. So that the Saints may not commend themselves, although it be true, they did sometimes report something of their owne vertues, but it was for holy example and instructions sake, and it was still with reference unto the maine object of praise, which was Christ.

The Saints may commend themselves.

1. When the praise thereof is given unto God.
2. When it is for holy example and instructions sake.
3. When they are forced thereunto by way of justification, through the calumniations of wicked people.

Thus *Paul* (as you know) was constrained to praise himselfe, least his doctrine should be defaced, 2 *Cor.* 11. 17. The false Apostles which sought all occasions to discredit him, did force him thereunto: and he saith, *That he dealt therein after the manner of fools*.

But for Christ to praise himselfe, it is without question very good and lawfull: for,

1. Christ doth never commend himselfe above his worth and excellency; neither did he commend himselfe above that which was meet.

2. Christ was God, and therefore could not sin: and as he was man he was holy, harmlesse, and separate from sinners; there was never any sin found in him, 1 *Pet.* 2. 22.

3. As Mediatour he was filled with the holy Ghost beyond all measure, and therefore his actions were holy, and all of them infinitely praise-worthy.

4. He hath not a greater in the point of our justification, sanctification, and eternall salvation, to beare witness of, or to commend, then himselfe. He indeed is the *Apostle of our profession*, and the *Angell or Messenger of the Covenant* between God and us, and therefore unto him give all the Prophets witness, Act. 10. 43.

Now then we may see, that as the Bride began the former Song, setting forth the excellency of the Bridegroom, and her desire to be with him, as the Author and Spring of all her joy and happinesse: so here, the Bridegroom beginneth first to praise himselfe, and then he commendeth his Spouse.

Now in that Christ doth thus praise himselfe: Observe,

That Christ may and doth commend and praise the sweetnesse and beauty of his owne graces unto his Saints. Christ doth here commend himselfe and his Spouse, both of them being excellent, good, sweet, faire, and beautiful; yea so, as they resemble each the other: for as he is as the lillie, she is so likewise; but yet Christ praiseth himselfe in the first place, because he is the very Fountain of sweetnesse and beauty, all fullnesse of sweet things is in him, and from him the Church receiveth all her goodnesse, beauty, and sweernesse. It doth appear that Christ may and did praise himselfe for his owne vertue and graces, by those selfe predications of his which we find in the Scriptures. *Looke unto me and be ye saved all the ends of the Earth. Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden.* When he read that place of the Prophet *Isaiah*, Chap. 61. 1. &c. He told the

people, this day is this Scripture fullfilled in your ears. When the excommunicated man asked him who the Son of God was, he answered him, *Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee:* and he told the Samaritanesse plainly, that he was the *Messias*. And it is said of the two Disciples, *That beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, he Expounded unto them in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himselfe.* Now all this doth commend unto us the excellency of Christ's graces, that he might praise and commend himselfe without the least blot of arrogancy, or taking too much upon himselfe. Thus Christ might doe, being the very Fountaine and Spring of all spirituall sweetnesse and beauty. Thus much for Christ's commending himselfe, next we have the commendation it selfe.

The rose of Sharon.

חבולת
Rosa

Christ's commendation is held forth under the resemblance of a sweet *Rose* which grew in a certaine peculiar Field, *Viz. in Sharon.* The Greeks turne it, *The flower of the field.* The *Rose* is the *Queene* of flowers, most excellent for sweetnesse and beauty. In the Translation we have the *species* used for the *Genus*, and so he is called an especiall flower which is the rose.

Of Sharon.

The Hebrews expresse the word *Field* by *Shadeh*, as in *Gen. 3, 1.* but here the word is *Sharon*, which exprefeth not any field, but one particular field so called, Of which field *Sharon* we read in *1 Chron. 5. 16.* bordering upon the holy Land. The fruitfullnesse of this field may appeare in *1 Chron. 27. 29.* where *David* fed his Cattell. And the Prophet maketh mention of the excellency

cellency of *Carmell and Sharon*, Isa. 35. 2. And when he promifeth mercy, he faith, *Sharon ſhall be a fold of ſtocks*, Isa. 65. 10. But when he threatneth deſolation, he faith, *Sharon is like a Wilderneſſe*, Isa. 33. 9. It was a fat field, and therefore imployed for grazing or fattening of Cattell. Now unto the roſe growing in this paſture, Chriſt aſſimilates himſelfe. Now let us take notice, that in diuerſe reſpects Chriſt may be likened unto a roſe, which may ſerve as ſo many Obſervations. Chriſt may be reſembled to a roſe in ſuch reſpects as theſe.

1. The roſe is pleaſant to the eye for the red & orient colour of it: ſo is Chriſt, he is ſaid to be *white and ruddy*, the chiefe of *ten thouſand*, Song 5. 10. White and red meeting in a roſe, it is (as I may ſay) the beauty of beauties, and ſuch is the beauty of Jeſus Chriſt. The red colour of Chriſt may ſignifie his bloody ſufferings: Of him it is ſaid, *Who is this that cometh from Edom, with red Garments from Bozra?* He is glorious in apparrell, &c. *wherefore art thou red in apparrell, and thy Garments like him that treadeth in the winepreſſe?* I have trodden the winepreſſe alone, &c. Isa. 63. 1. 2. Chriſt was ſtained with his owne blood. He is alſo white in his righteouſneſſe, his righteouſneſſe is deſcribed by *white linnen*, Revel. 19. 8. Now this temperament and mingling of white and red after ſuch a myſticall way in Chriſt, denotes the ſurpaſſing beauty of Chriſt, making him more glorious then any in the World. No marvaile then though the Pſalmiſt ſaith thus of him, *Thou art fairer then the ſonnes of Adam*, Pſal. 45. 2. It is true, the Prophet *Iſaiah* brings in carnall people ſpeaking thus of Chriſt: *Hee hath no forme nor comelineſſe, and when we ſhall ſee him there is no beauty that we ſhould deſire him*, Isa. 53. 2. But though Chriſt appeare thus to carnall hearts, yet he is

*Candor nudatum pe-
ctus, ruber
cruentum
latus, tenſa
arent viſce-
ra, decora
languent lu-
mina, regia
pallent ora,
procera ri-
gent bra-
chia, crura
pendent
marmoræ,
rigat tere-
bratos pedes
beati ſan-
guinis unda.*
Aug. Med.
cap. 6.

very excellent and desireable unto the Saints : he is to them red and orient of colour, as the *rose of sharon*.

2. The rose is sweet and comfortable to the smelling, to refresh the senses, and so the chiefeft of all Flowers. Such a one is Christ, nothing in the world is more pleasing and delightfull then he is to his Saints: the redolency of his grace doth exceedingly take the senses of their souls: his love like odoriferous flowers doth, to their unspeakable delight, draw and ravish their minds after him: whereby the senses of their soul are exceedingly taken with his sweetnesse. Hence it was, that Christ was represented to us by fragrant *wine*, by odoriferous *Ointment*, and by sweet *spikeword*, *myrrhe*, and *camphyre*, as in the former Chapter, and here by a sweet smelling rose. This comfort caused *Paul* to forget the things that were behind him, & to count all things dung in comparison of Christ: such a favour it was that did comfort and refresh the Martyrs senses and affections: when one of them thought no otherwise of the fire, then if he had been lodged in a pleasant bed of roses. When *PolyCarpus* (Bishop of *Smyrna*) was burned, in stead of stench, the Christians are reported to have smelt a fragrant sweet odour, as of incense, or of some precious perfume. Hence it is, that the faith and graces of the Saints are so impregnable, and that their hope is so indefatigable and never out of breath, that no stormes of temptation can breake their spirits, and make them give out: it is nothing (I say) but that exceeding swavity and sweetnesse, that they find to be in Christ: his sweetnesse makes them take pleasure in infirmities and reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for his sake; and when they be weake in themselves, then they are strong in him, and

Enseb. Hist.
Lib. 4.
Cap. 15.

and more then Conquerours, as the Apostle saith.

Besides, Christ is no lesse sweet unto his Father also; for by Christ all our services are made sweet and redolent. It was not the savour of Noah's Beasts and Birds, (*Gen. 8. 21.*) but the savour of Christs Sacrifice, which caused the heavenly Father to smell a sweet savour of rest with the Earth. It is through Christ we find acceptance with the Father: it is he that is gone into the heavenly Sanctuary (as in the Law the High-priest went into the Sanctuary) with *Urim* and *Thummim*, with the names of his people upon his Breast, for a memoriall before the Lord continually: so that now through his mediation we may draw neere unto God in *Plerophorie*, and full assurance of faith: nothing doubting, but that God will for his sake accept both of our persons and of our prayers. Hence it is that the Apostle saith, *If any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins*, 1 John 2. 1, 2. Here is sweetnesse indeed, let us but observe the Apostle.

1. He saith, *If any man sin*, not as though there were some that did not sin; for that this very Apostle beats against expressly in the end of the first Chapter: but when he saith, *If any man sin*, he speaks cordiall things, he speaks to the heart and comfort of sinners, shewing that with God there is no acceptation of persons; but all without exception of any exteriour adjuncts and qualitts, doe find grace in Gods sight through Christ: this is plainly the inference of the indefinite particle, *any*.

2. He saith, that *we have an Advocate*; an Advocate is a forensicall word, and it signifies properly one that is called to, or assumed as an assistant, as a friend, as an helper,

helper, as an intercessor: such a one is Christ for his Saints, he is their Patron, he is their spokse-man, he it is that pleadeth their cause, he it is that by the merit of his expiation, doth intreat for them.

3. Christ is an *Advocate with the Father*: he is so with the Father that he is his owne naturall Son; so with him that he needs but onely shew himselfe for us, and without speaking any word we are accepted: hence it is that he saith, *I will pray the Father for you*, John 16. 26.

4. Our Advocate is *Jesus*; a most sweet and heart-ravishing name, and it signifies a Saviour; one that doth not onely intreat for us, but perfectly save us.

5. He is called *Christ*, there's an addition and increase of comfort in this name, it signifies anointed. He was anointed to be our Priest, to offer a reconciling Sacrifice to God for us.

6. Christ is called the *Righteous*, and that by way of eminency; none so righteous as he, he is perfectly righteous, so that he need not plead for himselfe, he pleadeth onely for us, and therefore must needs have good successe in his pleading.

Lastly, Christ is such a one as stands in our roome, and takes the whole penalty and punishment due to us for our offence, upon himselfe: therefore the Apostle adds that he is the *propitiation for our sins*: That is, he is the Sacrifice that begs and procures pardoning mercy for us. Thus Christ gets acceptance for us with the Father, according as he saith, *Whatsoever you will aske the Father in my name he will give it you*, John 16. 23: It is Christ that puts incense upon our prayers, and mingles them with the sweet odours of his owne merits: he is the onely Altar of Christians, sanctifying all their gifts and Sacrifices.

3. The rose delighteth in shadowy places: for as over much cold would starve it, so overmuch heat would scorch and burne it. Thus Christ doth appear unto his Saints in a moderate way, in all his dispensations; he sometime afflicts his people that he may purge them, and heale them, which cannot be done without some smart and bitterneſſe, but yet withall he mingles abundance of love and sweetneſſe with thoſe afflictions: So that his sweetneſſe doth (as it were) ſwallow up all his bitterneſſe: his bitterneſſe is in the loweſt degree, but his sweetneſſe in the ſuperlative. Chriſt doth ſo moderate his diſpenſations, that he will not ſuffer us by wantonneſſe to abuſe his love and mercy, neither yet will he ſuffer us to periſh by afflictions.

4. The roſe is a cooler unto nature: thus Chriſt is a cooler of his Fathers wrath and indignation. The ſoul being convicted of its ſinfullneſſe, ſpeaks as the Prophet doth, *Who among us ſhall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us ſhall dwell with the everlaſting burnings?* God is devouring fire and everlaſting burnings in relation to ſinners: his wrath is like the fire of hell, as I may ſay: the breath of his indignation is like a River of brimſtone, kindling and perpetually maintaining the flames of *Sophet*: What ſhall the poore ſoul doe now? Here is nothing but menaces and threatnings, terrours and amazements, death and deſtruction, and where is the remedy? No where but in Chriſt alone. *Israel* paſſing through the Wilderneſſe had a Cloud to cover him, and defend him from the Scorching Sun-beams: now what was that Cloud but a type and ſhadow of Chriſt, as the Apoſtle makes it, *1 Cor. 10. 1, 2.* he makes there the Cloud, and the Sea, and the Manna, and the water of the Rock, to be all figures and Images

Images of Christ. Christ is a Sea to wash, Manna to feed, water to refresh, and a cloud to hide the soul from the hot and burning wrath of God: the fiery beams of that wrath would surely suffocate and stifle us, were it not that Christ did interpose and set betweene to imbrillate and veile our souls from it.

5. The rose though it be sweet and comfortable to the smelling, yet 'tis offensive to the sense of feeling, because it is full of prickles. Thus is Christs Gospel accompanied with the Crosse and Tribulations; his selfe suffered in his owne person, so that in respect of his depressed condition the Prophet saith, *His visage was so marred more then any mans, and his forme more then the Son of men*, Isa. 52. 14. And againe he saith, *He was despised and rejected of them, a man of sorrows and acquainted with griefe: he was oppressed and afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth, &c.* Isa. 53. 3. 7. His Members also must suffer the same things, they must drinke of his Cup, and be Baptized with his Baptisme if they will be his Disciples, they must take up their crosse and follow him. Christ is the Rose of Sharon, or the flower of the field. Now Sharon (as was hinted before) was a field of pasture for Bulls and Oxen contiguate to Bashan; it being a field for grazing and feeding of Cattell, must not onely be fertile, but also admit shadding plat for the best shelter, in the heat of the day: so that the roses of Sharon must needs be flowers of a singular kind. Now we may note two or three things from the place where this rose grew, to wit in Sharon.

1. Sharon was an open field where Cattell fed: Bulls and Oxen and unreasonable Beasts did graze there. Hence note, these roses then were subject to all spoyle and lewd trampling under feet: so that Christ and his Church

Church were both exposed to persecution, to be plucked of all that passe by the way, and trodden down and eaten of Beasts.

Secondly note from the places fertilitie and shadow, whereby the rose was super-excellent, notwithstanding the danger it was in : that notwithstanding the danger of this flower, by reason of *Sbarons* beasts (yea of *Bashans* Bulls) and all those perilous things accompanying Christ, yet Christ is made able to overcome and conquer them all. Let all his enemies fret and push their fill : from *Edom* and *Bozrah*, with red garments stained with blood, yet Christ alone shall triumph over them ; for saith he, *who is this that cometh from Edom, with died garments from Bozrah? wherefore art thou red in apparrell?* *Ego.* I have (saith Christ) trodden the wine-presse alone, and there was none with me : for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will staine all my raiment, *Isa.* 63. 1, 2, 3. *Edom* is put by a Synecdoche for all Christ's enemies : because among the enemies of the Church of the *Jewes*, the *Edomites* were none of the least as appears in *Psal.* 137. 7. and therefore here *Edom* is propounded as a type of all the spiritual enemies of Christ and his Church : now Christ threatneth to dissipate and break them all; he will tread them downe, as grapes in the wine-presse : so that Christ will preserve both himselfe and Church from the fury of the Beasts of *Sharon*, and Bulls of *Bashan* : for he is exalted at the right hand of the Father, and shall reigne untill his enemies be made his foot-stool, *Psal.* 110. 1.

M m

Thirdly,

Thirdly, he is the *Rose of the field*, not of the garden. Hence note: That Christ is not a rose sprung up, and become orient, and sweet from the industry of man, but groweth only by the providence and good pleasure of God. Christ was not brought forth by any humane power, wisdom, or wit; but hee was the will of the Father, and the power of God; so that Christ had his being and all his excellency from God but not from man.

Fourthly, the flower of the field is not inclosed and made private to a few, as the flower in the garden, but it is common to all that wil gather it: so is Christ a common Saviour, not of the Jewes only, but of the Gentiles also: God hath enlarged his heritage, so that the sonnes of *Iaphet* may dwell in the Tents of *Shem*. Christ doth not refuse any that come unto him; but all sorts of people, *Jew* and *Gentile* may be accepted. This is elegantly set forth by the Prophet, *Isa. 41. 19.* where God promiseth to plant in the wilderness the Cedar, the *Sitath tree*, the myrtle, the *olive tree*, the *fir-tree*, the *pine*, and the *box-tree* together. This was also represented unto *Peter* by a sheet knit at four corners, wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the aire, *Act. 10. 12.* And the Apostle was bid to arise, and to slay and eate. Now by this he was taught, that not only the *Gentiles*, as well as the *Jews* were admitted into Christ's kingdom: but of every nation (as himselfe afterwards expounds it) he that feareth God and worketh righteousnesse, is accepted of him, *vers. 35.* We read, that the fleece of *Gideon* was first wet, and the bean-floor dry; then afterwards the barne-floor was

wet,

wet, and the flreece dry: so God gave his law first to the seed of *Abraham*, and not unto the *Gentiles*; then the *Gentiles* which were the wild olives, were ingrafted, and the naturall olives were rejected, but he will at length save both Jew and Gentile. The Scripture it selfe speaks thus, *Isa. 56. 6, 7.* God promiteth, *that he will bring the sonnes of the stranger* (that is the *Gentiles*.) *to his holy mountaine, and make them joyfull in the house of prayer, and their burnt-offerings, and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon his Altar: for* (saith hee) *my house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.* So that Christ was an Altar for all nations, whereon both Jewes and Gentiles were an offering acceptable to God. And a like place there is in *Isa. 60. 7.* *All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee; the Rams of Nebajoth shall minister unto thee; they shall come up with acceptance on mine Altar, and I will glorifie the house of my glory.* Here Christ is made an Altar, that makes the Gentiles (as I may say) a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour unto God.

Fifthly, the flower of the garden is only for pleasure, but the flower of the field is for profit, it is medicinable, and fit for an ingredient in electuaries to heale diseases. So looke upon Christ as upon the most gainfull and profitable thing to the soule, that can be imagined: nothing more fit and commodious, nothing more enriching then Christ is: he is gaine for himselfe, without relation to any other besides himselfe: he is a rich and inestimable treasure to the soul. *wisdom is better then Rubies*; and all the things that may be desired, are not to be compared to it, *Prov. 8. 11.* And doubtlesse Christ is the wisdom there spo-

ken of : So for the rose of Sharon, it followeth,

The lillie of the vallies.

Plinie Nat.
Hist lib. 25
cap. 5.

Here Christ doth assimilate himselfe to the precious *Lillie*. The lillie (saith *Plinie*) is next in nobility unto the rose. The Scripture sets it forth to be a glorious and amiable flower, even *Solomon* in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these, saith Christ, *Matth. 6. 29*. Christ doth assimilate himselfe to the precious lillie of the vallies, and that in these respects.

First, The lillie is a flower of hot quality : so that as Christ was compared before to a rose of cold quality, because he cooles his Fathers wrath, and because he cooles the hot distempered lusts in the soule : so here he is compared to a Lillie, which is hot in operation, because he doth warm and revive his people.

Secondly, the Lillie is of an excellent cleer colour, it was of a super excellent beauty, according to the fore-named place, *Mat. 6. 29*. *Solomon* in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But behold (Jesus Christ) a greater then *Solomon* is here, *Matth. 12. 41*. compared to the lillie of the valeys, which farre surmounted *Solomon* in all his glory. Christ was clothed with the Spirit of God : It was said of him, the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, *Isa. 61. 1*. And God saith, I will put my Spirit upon him, *Isa. 42. 1*. That is, I will cloath him with my Spirit. Now if the Spirit be his garment, then no creature, nor all the creatures in the world can compare with him in glory.

Thirdly, the Lillie is called of the Hebrewes *Sassan*, which signifies the flower of six, because of his six leaves, we have the same expression in the Title of

Psal.

Psal. 45. It is dedicated to him that excelleth on *shoshannim*, that is, on *six stringed instruments*. The Hebrew word is derived of *shesh*, that is, *six*: So in *six dayes* God created the world: so the creation of the new Heavens, and new earth is agreeable to the former; which shall be done by Christ.

Fourthly, The *Lilie* is of golden colour within: so is Christ full of golden graces, he is a head of gold, *Song. 5.* and he makes his Members futable, by issuing out of himself, golden streames of grace into their hearts.

Fistly, The higher and the taller the *Lilie's* stalke is, the more dependent and hanging downe is the head thereof: thus it was with Christ, *ἐκ μωρῶν θεῶν*, in the forme, (or essence) of God, or in the nature and condition of God: yet he tooke upon him the state, and condition of a servant *He thought it no robbery (or rapine) to be equall with God*: yet he suffered himselfe to be denuded and robb'd of his glorie by sinfull men; God calls him *the man*, that is *his fellow*, *Zech. 13. 7.* and yet he was made a fellow to Theeves and malefactors; and though he was full of glorie and excellency, yet he emptyed himselfe of all; for so are the words of the Apostle, *ἐκ ὕδωρ αὐτὸν ἐκενόησεν ἢ ἐμptyed himselfe*, that is, he reduced himselfe as it were to nothing, he did, as it were, exhaust and draw himselfe drie, he did for a time deny himselfe, casting aside his robes of Majesty; by his voluntary condescending to such a low debasement, as he under-went for us.

Sixthly,

Sixthly, The *Lilie* is a flower of a redolent and sweet savour : so Christ in all his graces, is much more sweet and ravishing.

Now for the *valleys*, where these *Lilies* grew, it notes unto us.

First, That Christ's condition was meane and low, in respect of outward things, he is not the lofty *Cedar*, but the lowly *Lilly* : But though Christ was like a Tree, whose root was in the earth ; yet his fruit reached as high as heaven.

Secondly, The *Valleyes* note unto us the fruit and benefit of Christ's humiliation, for the *Lilie* of the valleyes is capable of more moisture, then is the *Lilie* of the mountains : even so Christ by debasing himselfe, received abundance of grace and glorie from the Father ; and wee also are exalted by his debasement, for by a supply of his grace, notwithstanding our low and base estate, are made sweet and amiable like the *Lilie* ; as the Lord saith, *I will be as the dew upon Israel, he shall blossom as the Lilie, and strike forth his roots as Lebanon, Hos. 14. 5.*

So much of Christ's speech touching himselfe, having so compared himself to *The rose of Sharon*, and the *Lilie of the valleys*. Now followeth his speech touching his Church.

Verf. 2. *As the Lilie among Thorns, so is my love among the Daughters.*

Now Christ utters the commendations of his spouse, where he confirmeth and amplyfieth the former speech, preferring her above other people, as
the

the lillie is above Thornes and Thistles; and withall signifying how she is afflicted and pricked with them, as with Thorns.

In this verse we have Christs comparison betweene the Church, and such a Lillie, as growes among Thornes.

Now let us consider,

First, *What* and *who* is this *Lili*.

Secondly, The *Thorne*.

Thirdly, The *love*.

Fourthly the *Daughters*.

First, what this Lillie is; it may necessarily be concluded of the Church; notwithstanding Christ himselfe was compared unto the Lillie in the former verse.

It is not unusuall in Scripture for Christ, and his Church to be set forth, by one and the same thing: Christ is called *the light*, *Joh. 1. 7, 8.* his Church is called the same, *Matth. 5. 14.* So in the former verse, Christ is termed a *Lilie*, which for a new consideration the same terme is given unto the Church, and that in these respects.

First, in respect of spirituall beauty, the Church is compared to a *Lilie* that is white of colour, and very beautifull: The Church is *washed, and sanctified, and justified in the name of Jesus Christ*, *1 Cor. 6. 11.*

Secondly, The Saints rely upon God, as Lilies are said to be glorious by his providence. *Why care ye for rayment saith Christ? learne of the Lilies of the feild, how they neither labour nor spin, yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glorie, is not clothed like one of these,* *Matthew 6. 28.* Hence we should be taught to relie wholly

wholly upon God, casting all our care upon him. Thirdly, It is incident to this delicate and daintie flower, to grow among the perverse and unbeleevers; the Saints, as Lilies, flourish and shine among the Thornes. Hence it is that the Apostle saith, *Wee must be blamelesse, and pure, as the Sonne of God, without rebuke in the middest of a naughty and crooked generation, among whom yee shine, as lights in the world, Phil. 2. 15.*

Secondly, *what and who* these thornes be, is easily decided. The naturall thorne is no tender herbe or flower, but a sturdie hard Tree, not smooth as the Lillie, but knotty and full of dangerous pricks; who these thornes be, let David declare, in that he saith, *The wicked be every one thornes, 2 Sam. 23. 6.* where the word *wicked* is expressed in the originall by the word *Belial*, which well declareth the nature of wicked men, for that they be (as some expound the word) *Beli. gual, without yooke*, that is such as will not come under the yooke of obedience. Others derive it of *Beli* and *Gnalah*, *not ascending*, because their matters prospered not, or, because they were such as ascended not to the Temple, nor to Mount Zion, the Tabernacle of the Lord. Such base earthly spirits, such beastly rude libertines, they be these Thornes.

Now wicked men are compared to Thornes, and that in these respects.

First, *Eryers* and *Thornes* were the fruit of God's curse upon the earth, *Gen. 3. 17, 18.* So are the wicked men of the world.

Secondly, *Eryers* and *Thornes*, they are of a perplexing nature, being full of dangerous prickles; such thornes are the wicked, who are continually pricking and

and fretting, and galling the people of God. Hence it is, that when the Lord promiseth to free his people from such, he saith, *There shall be no more a pricking brier to the house of Israel, nor any grievous thorne, of all that are round about them; that despised them,* Ezek. 28. 24.

Thirdly, Bryers and thornes, the best use that is commonly made of them, is but to hedge and fence in: So it is, that God often times makes use of these Bryers and thornes for the good of his people, so as by this meanes, he keeps them from wandring and stragling abroad, as Cattle doe out of unfenced pastures. Thus the Lord tells his people in *Hosea 2. 6. Therefore Behold I will hedge up thy way with thornes, and make a wall that thee shall not find her paths.* A like place we have in *Numb. 33. 55. If yee will not drive out the Inhabitants, &c. Those which ye let remaine of them shall be pricks in your eyes, and thornes in your sides, and shall vex you in in the Land wherein you dwell.*

Fourthly, The end of bryers and thornes is to be burned, Heb. 6. 8. they shall be dried and made fit fuell for the fire, and at last burned, for which see *2 Sam. 23. 6. They shall be burnt together.* Such will be the end of all ungodly ones, and such as dye in their sin: *Who would set the Briars and thornes against me in battaile* (saith the Lord) *I would goe through them, I would burne them together.* Thus we see what and who these thornes be, and in what respect wicked men are so called: Now it followeth that we enquire concerning the love here spoken of.

3. The love here spoken of is the Church (as before in Chap. 1. 9. *My love, companion, or fellow-friend*) who loveth Christ because he loved her first, *1 John 4. 19.* and whose love is kindled by the flames of Christs love. The love of Christ is as a lillie among the thornes.

סוּר
Socius, am-
icus, famili-
ris, soladis,
amicus.

4. and lastly, as for these daughters amongst whom she converseth, they be as thornes: by *Daughters* may be meant the great multitudes of people, as the Scripture mentioneth, *The daughters of Babylon*, Psal. 137. *The Daughters of Tyrus*, Psal. 45. So here we may understand multitudes of false brethren, hard-hearted and knotty conditioned, being full of prickles, such as are very offensive to the Saints.

This then is the condition of the Church of Christ: though she be as faire and glorious as the lillie; yet it is allotted to her to suffer persecution and hard entreaties of the wicked, even as Christ did before her: Christ is a lillie in the open fields of *S Sharon*, exposed to the wild Beasts that be there: so is his Church as a lillie among thornes by whom she is persecuted and prick'd; but yet she remaines passing glorious and beautifull, though among thornes.

VERS. 3, 4, 5, 6.

As the Apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sonnes: I sat downe under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet unto my tast.

He brought me into the Banquetting house, and his banner over me was love.

Stay me with flagons, comfort me with Apples, for I am sick of love.

His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me.

IN the two former Verses we had Christ praising of himselfe and his Spouse; upon which the Church in

in these fowre Verses doth returne praise to him again : as he set forth her praise, that shee excelleth all the daughters, as far as the lillie excelleth the thornes, so she commendeth him that he in dignity surmounteth all the Sonnes, as far as the Apple tree excelleth all the trees of the Forrest.

The Church doth declare Christ's excellency.

1. By comparison, she compareth him with all other for beauty, fruitfullnesse, comfort, and delight, unto the Apple tree, above all other trees, which bring forth no fruit, but are barren in the Forrest, Verf. 3. *As the Apple tree among the trees, &c.*

2. The effects or fruits of Christ, and they are double.

1. A fervent desire in the Church toward Christ, *Exceedingly delight to sit under his shaddow*, Verf. 4.

2. Christs loving provision made for her, *He hath brought me into the banqueting house*, &c. Verf. 4.

This was as a cause of love-sicknesse to the Church, upon which follows these effects.

1. A patheticall exclamation, or suddaine outcry of the Church, *Stay me with Flaggons and comfort me with Apples, for I am sick of love.*

Lastly, a remedy follows this disease, *His left hand is under my head*, &c. Verf. 6.

1. For the Churches comparison in these words, *As the Apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sonnes.* In which we may consider fowre things.

1. What the Tree is that is here spoken of.

2. The place it groweth in, to wit, in the Forrest.

3. The person resembled by this Tree.

4. The persons resembled to the place of the trees growth.

תפוח
Inde.
תפוח
Malus ar-
bor, & ma-
lum fructus

The Apple tree here spoken of is expressed in the Hebrew by the word *Tapuach*, expounded in Greeke by *μαῖα*, in Latine *Malus*. Some thinke that *Malum* an Apple, comes from *Malum* evill, because sin came first into the world by eating of an Apple. But others (unto whom I incline) think that it comes from *Maalo*, I more will or desire, because it is passing pleasing to nature, it being a fruit which man much desireth and delights in. An Apple tree is commended to us in these respects.

1. For its comfortable shaddow that it giveth, as appears in the following part of the Verse, it being a tree of a spreading nature.

2. It is very fruitfull, as likewise appears in this Verse, the Apple tree is fruitfull above all the trees of the Forrest, which bring forth no fruit, or else they bring forth wild, harsh, and sowre fruit not fit for food.

3. The Apple tree hath more variety of fruits than any other tree whatsoever, so that it can hardly be reckoned up how many various sorts of Apples there be, and that of different tast.

4. It is very pleasant in tast.

5. It is very sweet and refreshing unto the sense of smelling, as thereby a quickning power is conveyed into a fainting weake body.

Now by this is held out the plentiful supply of grace in Christ, flowing downe upon all his Members. Hence Observe,

That the Saints find a sweet supply of all grace in Christ.

For looke of what use and comfort the Apple tree is to mans body, the same, and much more is Christ unto the soule. Christ is a shaddow of protection unto his people; fruitfull in his communicating of grace, hea-
boundeth

boundeth in variety of all his graces : his fruit is good to the tast, and sweet unto the senses of the soul. cheering and comforting those that are weake by communicating of those graces to them. Christ hath in him sufficiency of all grace relative and suitable to all conditions : as Job saith that he was *eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame, and a Father to the poore* : so is Christ made every thing to Beleivers, in proportion to their wants. As *Elisha*, when he raised a Child to life, *Put his mouth upon the Childs mouth, his eyes upon the Childs eyes, his hands upon the Childs hands* : still similar parts were applied to similar : so doth Christ apply himselfe to us in a relation suiting and answering to every necessity. This of the *Appletree*.

Secondly, the place of this Appletrees growth, it is *among the trees of the wood, or, of the Forrest, or Grove, among wild trees*, begrowne over with mosse, and without culter, trees that bring not forth fruit meet for man, that are either barren, or else they beare wild, sowre, bitter, and unsavory fruits, such as is food for Hogs and wild Beasts rather then for man. Such is the state of all the Sonnes of men by nature, for so saith the Apostle in *Rom. II. 24.* that we are *wild by nature*, not as we were first made, but as we were corrupted in *Adam*, and so derived from him to his posterity : and therefore he saith, we were *grafted in contrary to nature*. That is, we are ingrafted into Jesus Christ by some means which is above nature. Now Christ far excelleth in beauty, fruit, and comfort, all the Sonnes of men.

Thirdly, the person assimilated to the Appletree, it is Jesus Christ, the Churches *Beloved*, from whom shee receives life, health, and every saving grace of the Spirit. The Hebrews expresse *Beloved* by the word *Dod*, which

which is the same in signification with *David*, as was hinted before in Chap. 1. 13. Christ is the Churches Beloved; he loved her first, therefore her duty is to love him againe, and therein shee faileth not, although shee be not able to love him so perfectly as shee ought, nor in such a measure as he loveth her.

Fourthly, the persons resembled by the Forrest trees they are termed *Sonnes*, not *sonnes of men*, yet the adjunct (*of men*) may be added, and so it may be meant of all the *Sonnes of Adam*, whom Christ far excelleth, as it is said of him in *Psal. 45. 3. Thou art fairer then all the sonnes of Adam*. The Church considers Christ not exalted but here on earth, in his estate of humiliation: not sitting in the Heavens, but pitching his *Tabernacle* among men. And therefore it cannot be that Christ is here compared unto the Angells which are called *the sonnes of God*, *Job 1. 6.* unto whom, in this estate, and in respect of taking our nature, and for the suffering of death, was somewhat inferiour, *Heb. 2. 7.* but in respect of the former similitude of *the trees of the wood*, we may understand it of all earthly creatures, as the Kings, and Potentates, and wise men of the world; these are called *sonnes*, as the peoples of the world were called *Daughters* in *Verl. 2.* Thus the King of *Astyria* is likened to a *Cedar in Libanon*, under whose shadow dwelt all great Nations, *Ezek. 31. 3. 6.* And *Nebuchadnezzar* is likened to a tree strong and high under which the beasts of the Earth dwelt, &c. So the Church doth extoll her beloved above all the great ones in the world, he being *the Prince of the Kings of the Earth*, *Rev. 1. 5.* These things remembred, let us see what is inferred.

First Observe,

That all men by nature are like the Trees of the Forrest,
which

which bring forth nothing but ſowre, bitter, and unſavory fruit.

All the fruits that man produceth by any naturall ability, it is like the fruit of a wilderneſſe, wild, bitter, and unſavory.

Secondly Note,

Chriſt is the Churches Beloved.

Chriſt loved us and gave himſelfe for us; he loved us when we were not, yea, when we were his enemies we were reconciled unto him; hence it is that the Saints love Chriſt.

Thirdly Note,

That Chriſt far excelleth all the great ones of the world, for beauty, ſweetneſſe, and comfort. So is my beloved among the ſonnes, &c. Chriſt was the firſt-borne of God, and therefore he was ſet above all the Kings of the Earth, *Pſal.* 89. 28. The firſt borne among the Jewes was the principall, and had three prerogatives: firſt, *a double portion of goods*, *Deut.* 21. 17. Secondly, *the rule or government*, *2 Chron.* 21. 3. Thirdly, *the Priest-hood*, *Numb.* 8. 14, 15. Now Chriſt is called the firſt-borne of God, to ſhew, that he is to be worſhipped and honoured above all things: he is ſaid to be the *firſt-borne of every creature, and the firſt-borne of the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence*, *Col.* 2. 15. 18. And therefore was to be worſhipped of all the *Angells of God*, *Heb.* 1. 6. And is the *Prince of the Kings of the Earth*, *Revel.* 1. 5. Thus much for the compariſon it ſelfe, now followeth the fruits or effects thereof.

I ſat downe under his ſhadow with great delight, and his fruit was pleaſant unto my taſt.

Here the Church declareth the fruit of Chriſts ſhadow

dow, and fruitfulness, and withall expresseth her earnest affection that she hath to be kept under Christs power, and under his protection from persecution and affliction.

Under his shadow, &c.

This comfortable shadow is the shield of protection and defence. The tree shaddoweth from the heat of the Sun, so Christ shadoweth from the wrath of God, and from the persecutions of men. The shadow of *Egypt* that we read of in *Isa.* 30. 2. and the shadow of *Hesbon*, *Jer.* 48. 45. signifie the defence wherein men trusted: now such a shadow of defence is Christ unto his people.

I sat downe with great delight.

חמך
Desidera-
vit, optavit,
cupiuit, con-
cupiuit.

We may read the words thus, *I much desired that I might sit, &c.* The forme of the Hebrew word doth increase the signification, so that it noteth a *continuell and fervent desire* of that which is *pleasing, delightfull, or profitable*: so that the sence is as much as this, *I did much please and delight my selfe to sit under his shadow, &c.* By *sitting* is meant *abiding, or resting*, as in *Psal.* 91. 1. *He shall lodge (or abide) under the shadow of the most high.* The shadow of a tree is comfortable, and doth refresh those that are parched with the boyling heat of the Sun. The Church is under hot persecutions, being in the world, as a *lilie among thornes*, she is also under wrath reveiled by the Law, therefore she taketh so much delight under Christs shadow, in him she findeth rest and peace, and therefore she siteth downe and remaineth under his shadow, because he hath *delivered her from the wrath to com*, 1 *Thess.* 1. 10. In whom she hath peace, though

in the world, ſhe hath tribulation. *Jehn 16. 33.* now ſhe proceedeth to an other fruit of his goodneſſe.

And his fruit was ſweet to my taſt.

The Church acknowledgeth, that ſhe is not delivered only from evill, but made partaker of his goodneſſe. *Fruits* ſignifie graces and good workes, *Mat. 3. 8.* and *Gal. 5. 22.* and they alſo ſignifie a comfortable reward, *Pſal. 58. 12.* *Prov. 27. 18.* but here wee may take them for the *words* and *workes* of Chriſt.

First, Chriſt's words are ſweet; for *David* cries outmoſt pathetically, ſaying, *How ſweet are thy ſpeeches to my palate, beyond hony unto my mouth! Pſal. 119. 103.* The Jewes confeſſe, *That never man ſpake like him:* and *Peter ſaith, Lord, thou haſt the words of eternall life, Joh. 6. 68.*

Secondly, Chriſt's workes are ſweet, his worke of incarnation, taking our nature upon him; his worke in our nature, killing of ſinne, by his death and reſurrection, and all the fruits of them, which are communicated unto us by the Goſpel: his glorious aſcenſion in our nature, leading captivity captive, and giving ſpirituall gifts unto men; his ſitting at the right hand of Majeſty in our nature, making continuall interceſſion for his people, his proteſtion in times of trouble, his preſence in the middeſt of perſecution, in a word, all the workes of his mediatourſhipp are ſweet, yea, pleaſant and pleaſure it ſelfe unto us.

From the first of these effects, Observe,

That Christ is a shadow of protection unto his people.

As Trees are a shadow from the hot scorching sun: so is Christ a shadow unto his people, from the heat of the wrath of God, and from the persecutions of the world. Thus the Lord prometh in *Isa. 4. 6.* *There shall be a Tabernacle for a shadow in the day time from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storme, and from raine.* The Lord doth promise by this Tabernacle, to be a defence unto them against all dangers and annoyances, set forth by allusions, as to the cover of the Tabernacle, *Exod. 36. 19.* and the use of the cloud, *Psal. 105. 39.* And thus wee have the Prophet saying, *Thou (Lord) hast been a strength to the poore, a strength to the needy in his distresse; a refuge from the storme, a shadow from the heat; when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storme against the wall, Isaiah 25. 4.*

Secondly, Observe,

That the Saints are much delighted and refreshed by this shadow of Christ's protection. I sate downe under his shadow with great delight, &c. Hence it is that the Psalmist cryeth, *Hide me from the conspiracie of the wicked, and from the rage of the workes of iniquitie, Psal. 64.* This comfortable shadow, this shoild of protection, the Saints most of all desire in the suns heat of persecution; hither they flie, as Doves unto their culture house, as the Child in the mother lapp; Christ was a shadow unto his Church in respect of the weight of her sinnes, she being terrifyed with the curse of the Law, which herselfe could not beare: now under this distresse

distresse of mind, she flyeth unto Christ for succour, to be throwded and protected by his grace, and to be covered by his righteousness from that terrible curse. When the soule is full of restless vexations, fluctuating and tumbled up and downe in a whole Ocean of perplexities and fears, and can see no shoare, no land, no creek or haven of comfort: then it must into the Arke, then it uses the soliloquie of the Psalmist; *returne unto thy rest O my soule!* then it cries out with the blessed Martyr, *O! none but Christ, none but Christ; there's my Arke, there's my rest, there's my refuge, there I shall finde reliefe and releasement, or else no where:* Christ will be a calme to me after a storme, he will dispell and drive away all these clouds, he will hold my head above the water, and keepe me from sinking; he will be light and joy, and unspeakable solace after all these distempers: thus the poore afflicted soule, *as a Prisoner of hope* (as the Prophet speakes, *Zach. 9. 12.*) returnes unto Christ, as to it's strong hold: Christ is called the *propitiatorie*, Rom. 3. 25. for as the propitiatorie covered the Arke, and the Law in the Arke, which was *The handwriting of ordinances against us*, Col. 2. 14. from the presence of God; so Christ covereth our finnes, and putteth himselfe betweene us and the indignation of his Father. The Apostle saith, *As many as are of the workes of the Law, are under the curse, for it is written, cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the booke of the Law to doe them*, Gal. 3. 10. So that there is no help but to fly to him for succour. *Moses* was a type of Christ, where it is said, that *Moses* his chosen Servant, stood before him in the gapp,

to turne away his wrathfull indignation, that he may not destroy his people, *Psal. 106. 23.* So Christ, the Mediator of the new Testament, must come betweene God and us, that he may not behold us but in him. The Saints finde that in him only is a full sufficiencie to refresh them, and to quench and coole all the heat of their sinnes, and of Gods wrath: farre otherwise it is with Idolaters, and such as worshipp false Gods, when they have done all they can, they are not satisfied, they finde no ease, nor no way to take away the sting of conscience; *They multiply their sorrowes*, as *David* speaks, *Psal. 16.* They doe punish and afflict themselves many wayes, seeking all meanes to make some satisfaction for their sinnes, to coole the burning heat of their guilty conscience, but when they have wearied themselves, they can finde no ease or rest; for that is only to be found under the shadow of this Apple-tree, where the Church here taketh her delight and is set downe: so that the Churches prayer is the same with that of *David*, *Psal. 91. 4.* that she might dwell under his protection, and abide under the shadow of his wings, that he would cover her with his feathers; his faithfulnessse and truth being applyed to her by faith, it may become hers, and so be unto her a shield and buckler.

Lastly, In that she doth not only delight under his shadow, but addeth, *his fruit is sweet unto my palate, or taste*: Observe, *That the Saints are sweetly, and fully satisfied with all good things in Christ.* All the faithfull feed upon Christ, and are nourished with all heavenly food, even with all the fruits of his mediatur-ship. And what is wanting in him? *Who is made unto us of*
 God.

God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, as the Apostle saith, 1 Cor. 1. 30. It pleased the Father that in Christ, should all fulnesse dwell, Col. 1. 19. from whom wee receive all spirituall blessings in heavenly places. The water of the Rock and the Manna in the Wildernesse were the signes, that Christ should spiritually feed and refresh his people. Now from the redundancy and overflowing fulnesse of all good things in Christ, the Saints have there sufficiencie and fulnesse, Of his fulnesse wee receive grace for grace, Job. 1. 16. that is, graces answerable to every communicable grace of Christ, that as face answers face in water: so we may be made answerable to our head; now then let us eate of these apples in faith, digest them by meditation, and we shall find in them more sweetness, than the Israelites did in their Manna, ; tast, and see how good the Lord is, as it is in Psal. 34. 8. every fruit of Christ's mediation, is an Apple of life, and every leafe of this Tree, serveth to heale the Nations withall, Revel. 22. 2. Now the Church being fully satisfied with all good things from Christ, which she doth here declare, not only by this allegorie of an Apple-tree, but also by a banquet, for she addeth in the next verse, saying:

Verf. 4. *He brought me into the Banqueting house,
and his Banner over me was love.*

The great Kings, and noble Princes of the world, doe use to entertaine one another in sumptuous and royall banquetting houses, in which they doe use to set before them all the dainty things which can be gotten

gotten for money : So here, the most high and glorious King of Kings, bringeth his beloved Spouse into the banquetting house, which doth excell all the banquetting houses of earthly Kings.

In this verse, wee have a narration of the plentiful provision Christ makes for his Church : wherein are uttered two glorious favours, and manifestations of Christs love unto her.

First, By his conveying her into the *Banquetting-house*, or, by a speciall adjunct termed, *The house of wine*.

Secondly, By his spreading his banner over her, termed from the effect, *dilection* or *love*.

He hath brought me, &c.

כּוּן

Venit, unde
in Hiph.

הָבִיא

Venire fecit
adduxit, in-
troduxit.

By this forme of speech she declareth her owne inabilityie, to come unto this heavenly banquet, that that Christ had provided for her, and doth withall declare the sweetnesse and efficacie of Christ's grace, working by the secret operation of his spirit inclining her heart, and swaying of her will, and so maketh her partaker of all his heavenly treasure.

Hence, Observe,

That wee cannot partake of the heavenly treasures which are in Christ, but through the operation of his owne spirit. He (to wit Christ) brought me, &c. No man (saith he) commeth unto me, except the Father that sent me draw him, Job. 6. And the Apostle doth fully shew, that al the grace we recieve from Christ, is from the powerfull working of his Spirit, 1 Cor. 2. It is Christ that doth comfortably and sweetly introduce his beloved Spouse

Spouse into the house of spirituall delicates.

The Church nameth the place into which *Messias* brought her.

To the banquetting house.

In the originall it is, *Beith baijn, domum vini, the house of wine*: it must needs be meant of the wine-celler, the place where wine is kept; or the banquetting house where wine is drunk, for Cellers are called the *Treasuries, or Store-houses of wine*, in *Chron. 27. 27.* now because a wine-Cellar is a low vault under the ground, dark, and cold, it may rather be taken for the banquetting-house, alluding to Kings of the earth, who use to entertaine one another in sumptuous and royall banquetting houses.

Now wine is very comfortable to the nature of man it slacketh his thirst, it cheareth his heart, *Psal. 104. 15.* it causeth him to forget his sorrow and miserie, *Prov. 31. 6. 7.* it comforteth the sick by cherishing and augmenting the vitall spirits, it is also said to be delightful to God, because it was offered up in sacrifice, (as I observed in Chap. 1. vers. 1.) by a Synech Joche, it is put for all fragrant, sweet, and comfortable things in the world. Now by this, the Church signifies an increase of grace from Christ; the shadow of Christ was a comfort unto her. but to be fed under that shadow with delectable fruit, that caused greater comfort: but now to be brought into a banquetting house and to be refreshed with fragrant wine, this must needs be exceeding and farre more comfortable unto her; forasmuch as the fruit of the Vine excelleth the fruit

fruit of the Apple-tree; and is much more comfortable unto the heart.

Hence, Observe.

That Christs love unto his Church, increaseth more and more.

It is like Nilus and Jordans waters overflowing their banks, not that Christs love doth admit of any increasings, or decayings: but in respect of the manifestations thereof, it is sometimes augmented for the spirituall consolation of his Church: for so saith the Apostle: *For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ,* 2 Cor. 1. 5. And *Israell shall grow from strength to strength,* Psal. 84. 7. Christs love never lessenneth, nor decayeth; but it is constant and firme, it is like the water of the sanctuarie, which abounded more and more, it begins in a drop and ends in an Ocean; and like a sparke converteth into such a flame, as that it shall consume all drosse and stubble before it.

Secondly, By this banquetting house, is noted all those rich and costly things which Christ and his Church doth banquet withall, which are not trash and drosse, and beggarly scraps, but those rich and precious delicates of Heaven.

Hence Observe,

That Christ communicateth all his sweet gifts to his Church.

Christ doth communicate his Spirit unto his Saints, with all the fruits thereof, as *love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentlenes, meeknesse, temperance,* Gal. 5. 22. 23. And the Saints are never satisfied untill Christ have filled their soules with divine graces, which

which they are made partakers of by faith : they feed upon Christ Crucified. *My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drinke indeed,* John 6. 55. That is, true spirituall food. In Christ there is all fullnesse, whom then can the Saints want ? For if there be light in the Sunne the Aire cannot be darke : if there be sap in the stock, the branches cannot be dry : if there be fullnesse in the Fountaine, the streams cannot be empty. Christ is the Olive-tree that standeth before the ruler of the whole Earth, and emptieth it selfe by the pipes and Conduits of his word, into the golden Candlesticks of his Church, *Zech. 4.* Light and grace in the ministraton of holy Ordinances flow from him ; for in him there's righteousnesse, there's life, there's peace, there's joy, even unspeakeable and glorious, as the Apostle saith, *1 Peter 1. 8.*

Thirdly, by this house of wine we may understand it of the Scriptures, or of the assembly of the Saints who are the house of God, and unto whom is afforded all spirituall comforts signified by wine. And thus *wisdom* (which is meant of Christ) is said to *have built her house*, *Prov. 9. 1.* That is, Christ who is the supream wisdom, yea, wisdom it selfe, hath prepared him a Church, and 'tis added, *shee hath hewn out her seven pillars* : that is, he hath many chiefe props and stayes which are principall parts of his Church : his house being built, in Vers. 2. he prepares for to make a great Banquet, the Text saith, *Shee hath killed her Beasts, shee hath mingled her wine, shee hath also furnished her Table.* Wisdom is compared to a stately Queene that makes a Feast, and keeps open house (as we use to say) for all commers : So is the Kingdome of Heaven likened to a King that married his sonne, *Mat. 22. 2.* And they are blef-

sed and happy which are called to this supper. Revel. 19. 9.
 And in that it is said, *shee hath mingled her wine,* im-
 deth to the custome of the Jewes, who, because of the
 hottesse of their Countreyes, did use to powre out, or
 mingle their wine with water, to allay the heat of it.
 So doth Christ quallifie and fit heavenly food, and
 makes it suitable to our appetites. Now wisdome hath
 built her house, and mingled her wine. &c. inviteth the sin-
 ple to come, and eat of her bread, and drinke of her wine,
 Vers. 5. And so Christ in Song 5. 1. saith, *Eat O my*
Friends, drinke yee, drinke abundantly, O beloved. Thus
 much for the first favour of Christ towards his Spouse,
 to wit, his conveying her into the house of wine. The
 second favour manifested by Christ to his Church fol-
 loweth.

And his banner over me was love.

The spreading of a Banner, or the lifting up of a Stan-
 dard, is mentioned in Isa. 49. 22. *Behold (saith the Lord)*
I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my stand-
ard, to the people, &c. The end of Gods setting up his stan-
 dard here is noted to be for the drawing in of the Gen-
 tiles, which banner must needs be meant of the display-
 ing of the Gospell. And Christ layed open in the Gos-
 pell is said to stand for an Ensign of the people, and to him
 shall the Gentiles seeke, Isa. 11. 10. And he shall be set an
 Ensign for the Nations, Vers. 12. This Banner or Ensign
 hath allusion to the manner of Captaines, who by their
 setting up of their Ensigne doe gather their Souldiers
 together. So Christ the Captaine of our salvation,
 doth gather and draw a people to himselfe by the set-
 ting up his Standard of the Gospell, and by displaying
 the colours of his truth. The standard of his word of life

he lifts up among his people, calling them by the display of his banner unto himselfe.

Secondly, the displaying of a Banner signifies terrour to the adversaries, and victory to the Church; shee is said to be terrible as an Army with Banners, Cant. 6. 4. 10. And the Church in signe of victory, saith, *Wee will shout joyfully in thy Salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up the Banner*, Psal. 20. 6. The Israelites were every one to pitch by his owne Standard, Numb. 2. 2. So must the Saints pitch under Christs Standard of victory and defence.

Hence Note,

That Christ obtaineth victory over all his enemies, and is a defence to his owne people. But we are farther told whereof this Ensigne was made and set up, and that was of Love, *His banner over me was Love.* Love, here is meant of that wherewith Christ hath loved us, 1 John 4. 10 by which he redeemed his Church, Ephes. 5. 26. This love is the Ensigne, that he displayes over us for provoking us to come unto him; yea, all his severall loves are displayed in his glorious Gospell, as an Ensigne or Banner together together unto him all his Saints.

Hence Observe,

That all the Saints and chosen of God are drawne unto Christ by his love. For the love of Christ is the Ensigne spread, by which he draweth all his Saints unto him: and none are drawne, but those onely over whom the same Ensigne is displayed. Now this banner is spread, when the Gospell is preached, and the riches of Christs love laid open, whereby the faithfull are drawne to Christ. What love is like to his, who hath given himselfe for us, when we were his Enemies? Rom. 5. *Who washed us in his owne blood*, Rev. 1. Here then is the principle and

ground of all our obedience, or of our praise, and that is love, which love is wrought in our hearts by the displaying of the banner of Christ's love over us. All that we can doe is nothing if there be not this principle of love: hence saith the Apostle, *The love of Christ constraineth us*; 2 Cor. 5. 14. And we read of the woman in the Gospell which washed the feet of the Lord with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head: from whence proceeded all this? Was it not because she loved much? And why did shee love much? *Because* (saith Christ) *Many sins were forgiven her*. Shee had felt the banner of his love spread over her in forgiving her many sins, and this did draw her to love him exceedingly. The Apostle doth reckon up all the fruits of Christs spreading of his love abroad in the hearts of the Saints, saying, *We rejoyce in tribulations being justified by faith, knowing that tribulation bringeth patience, patience experience, experience hope, hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the holy Ghost which is given to us*, Rom. 5. 3, 4, 5. When the soul comes to the assurance of faith, by the displaying of Christs banner of love in the Gospell, then neither tribulation, nor anguish, persecution or famine, nakednesse, or perill of sword, shall be able to separate them from the love of Christ, but they shall be more then Conquerours through him that loves them, as the Apostle saith.

Hence learn what is the chiefe duty of the Ministers of the Gospell, namely, to spread before men the Banner of Christ's love; yea, to publish and lay open the riches of his love to mankind, in offering himselfe to be a ranfome for the sins of the world, to draw men out of carnall misery, unto a most happy, spirituall, and blessed

ſed condition. Then extoll and liſt up the Enſigne of Chriſt's love, and diſplay the banner thereof, that men may be gathered in unto it. The Miniſters of the Goſpell ſhould ſpend their whole force this way, that men may be drawne to Chriſt; who will ſeek after that which he knows not of? And who would not ſeek after ſome precious Jewell? O then! tell people where this Jewell, this pearle, this treaſure is, that they may ſeek after it: Diſplay the Enſigne of Chriſt's goodneſſe, mercy, grace, and love, that people may be provoked to praiſe Chriſt, and yeild obedience unto him. So far concerning the narration of Chriſt's favours; now followeth the Churches requeſt.

Verſ. 5. *Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples, for I am ſick of love.*

Here we have a wonderfull effect of thoſe former things which ſhee ſpoke of; ſhe compared Chriſt unto an Apple tree, under whoſe ſhadow ſhe tooke delight, and ſat downe, and his fruit was pleaſant unto her palate. He brought her into the houſe of wine, by the diſplaying over her the banner of love. Hence it is her heart is ſo much taken and raviſhed with love towards him againe, that ſhee is love-ſick, and ready to ſwoon therewith, and cryeth out to have them ſtay her up with *Flagons*, and to comfort her with *Apples*.

In the words we have,

First, a requeſt of the Church, and this iſtwo-fold; ſhee ſaith,

1. *Stay me with flagons.*

2. *Comfort me with apples.*

Secondly, we have the Churches reaſon of her earneſt requeſt, in theſe words, *For I am ſick of love.*

The

The thing shee so much requesteth is spirituall sustentation and strength, compared with flagons of wine, and the savour of Apples. So that looke how comfortable wine is to the heart, and the savour of pleasant apples to the sense; such, and much more is the sense and sweetnesse of Christs graces to his Church.

Stay me with flagons, &c.

מְדַבֵּר
Immix
suit, impo-
suit, fulci-
vit, susten-
tavit.

Stay or *sustaine, strengthen, prop, or uphold ye me.* The similitude is drawne from hence, when a Virgin is betrothed, and through the vehemency of her love towards her beloved, is sick and swooneth. So here, the Church having tasted the sweetnesse of those Apples, and of that heavenly wine, hath such a desire of Christ, that makes her breake forth into this patheticall exclamation, or suddaine outcry, *Stay me with flagons, &c.*

But unto whom doth shee cry out for these flagons, and for these sweet Apples? She seemeth not to direct her words unto Christ, for she speaketh in the Plurall number, and not unto one single person, saying, *Stay or uphold ye me.* Most thinke that shee speaketh unto the Ministers of Christ, and other Christians, that they might uphold and stay her, applying the comfortable doctrines of the promises of the Gospell unto her heart and conscience, because of her owne infirmities, and the want of the feeling of Christs love and graces. For spiritually we are sustained and strengthened by words and promises of Christ, these comfort the heart, these quicken the spirit, these strengthen the weake faith, as the Apostle James saith, *Be yee patient, strengthen your hearts, for the comming of the Lord draweth nigh,* Jam. 5. 8. And saith Paul, *I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spirituall gift, to the end you might be established or strengthened,*

strengthened, Rom. 1. 11. Now then the Church calleth unto those into whose hands Christ hath committed these treasures to deliver unto her, towit, those faithfull Servants, the Apostles and Prophets, and all holy teachers, for by the ministry of these, the Lord hath delivered unto his Church all those heavenly mysteries of Salvation; and so the Apostle speaks, *That which I have received of the Lord (saith he) I also have delivered unto you*, 1 Cor. 11. 23. And thus the Apostles were laid to *Confirm (or establish) the souls of the Disciples*, Acts 14. 21, 22. Now the Church doth direct her Speech unto them, not as unto the Authors, but as unto the ministers of those things: for shee knoweth that they be wholly and altogether in Christ. They are but as *Stewards and dispensors of the mysteries of God*, 1 Cor. 4. 1.

Hence Observe,

That Christians in distresse desire to be comforted of others.

Many times when we are not able to apply the promises of comfort unto our selves, yet others may so apply them, that we may be comforted. The Church addeth.

With flagons.

By *Flagons* no doubt she meaneth by the figure Metonymie, the thing containing, for the thing contained: to wit, the *Wine* in those Flagons, which must needs be meant of the wine of consolation, and of grace and favour. So the cup is put for the wine therein, Luk. 22. 20. Now by *Flagons* is meant of the distribution of all good things in the Banquet of this Gospell of Christ. When David had brought the Arke of God unto his place,

place, and had Offered Burnt-offrings and Peace-offrings, and blessed the people, *He dealt to every one of Israel, both man and woman, to every one a loafe of bread and a good piec of flesh, and a Flagon,* 1 Chron. 16. 1, 2, 3. Meaning a Flagon of wine. And there is mentioned in *Hof. 3. 1. Flagons of grapes.* That is, of wine made of Grapes.

כִּי
נִי

*Fukite me
in lagenis.*

Arius
Mont.

Arius Montanus turnes the Hebrew according to the Letter thus, *Underprop me in the Flagons*: and so the next words, *Comfort me in the Apples*, that is, amidst the Flagons, and amidst the fruit: for the Text hath not the particule (*Eth*) with, but the letter *Beth*, which signifieth *in, among*, sooner then *With*. And you may take the sense thus, as if the Church should say: O my well-beloved, vouchsafe that thy Ministers, towit, thy Prophets, Evangelists, Apostles, Teachers, &c. may apply unto me with all care and dilligence, all the cordiall promises of the Gospell: these are the full flaggons of that spirituall wine which onely can cheare and comfort me, who am ready to faint and swoon amidst this divine Banquet: my senses being weake to sustaine the strong odour of thy graces, unlesse sustained by some spirituall assistance from them that are able, sweetly and comfortably to apply the promises of the Gospell unto me.

Hence, Observe,

That the promises of the Gospell yeild most comfort unto the Saints when they are sweetly applied unto them.

The Church here desires to be sustained with flagons of the wine of Christs grace and consolation distributed unto her soule. It is the explication of Christs excellency and riches, and the applying of them to the hearts of the Saints, that brings comfort, peace,

peace, joy, unspeakable, and full of glorie. Hence it is, that the Apostle saith, *Unto me, who am lesse then all the Saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles, the unspeakable riches of Christ; and make known unto all men, what is the fellowship of the mysterie, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ; to the intent that now unto Principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be made known by the Church, the manifold wisdom of God, Ep. 3, 8, 9, 10.* The Apostle doth testifie, that he was to display and reveale the hidden mysteries of Christ unto the Gentiles; by which meanes, principalities and powers, to wit, the Angels, who are very desirous to looke into, and contemplate the manifold wisdom of God, and the dispensing of gifts and graces in Christ to the Saints: even these Angels might have a new prooffe of the wisdom of God, by the preaching of the Gospell.

Thus for the first request of the Church.

The second followeth.

Comfort me with Apples.

The originall *Rapad*, signifieth properly to spread abroad as a bed to lye on, so it is used by Job, when he saith, *I have made my bed in the darknesse, Job. 17. 13.* that is, I have spread or prepared my bed; wee may read it, *spread me a couch, bolster me up, or, strow me a bed.* It was their manner then, to strow their beds with hearbes, or to stuffe and bolster them up. Now the Church meaneth the same thing by these Apples, laid as it were under her; as in the former words, by the flagons, for they used beds at banquets and feasts.

mos 6. 4. Or, it signifieth her falling into a swoone; and then shee alludeth to the custome of men, who, when others are swooning or fainting, are wont to put strong smelling things into their nostrils: so the Church meaneth, that for her comfort and refreshing, and restoring her againe, as it were from death to life, she would have the sweet smelling Aples, to wit, the comfortable doctrine, and fruits of Christ, that are brought out of Christs treasury, both held and applyed to her, that by that meanes she may be recovered.

Hence, Observe.

That the only meanes to recover and refresh a soule, that is ready to faint for want of the feeling of Christs love, is to apply the sweet promises and consolations of the Gospell unto it.

For here the Church being inflamed with the love of Christ, that she is ready to swoone and faint in the midst of the banquet, as it were for longing after her beloved, crying out with patheticall exclamation, *Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples.* The Church having requested some aid and help, shee tendereth a reason, and declareth what is her distemper.

For I am sick of love.

חלה
Egrotavit
infirmus
fuit.

Here wee have the reason of the Churches sicknesse, enlarged from the cause thereof, namely, love; she was in languishing with desire to enjoy the comforts of her beloved. The word *cholah*, signifies sicknesse or weaknesse: so by this speech may be meant her want of feeling and enjoying the presence and comforts of Christ,

Christ, for such is the condition of the Church often. Now love is one of the strongest affections; and therefore the sicknesse arising from it, must needs be very sore, as may be seene in the example of *Ammon*, who was sick of love for his Sister *Tamar*, 2 Sam. 13. 1, 2, &c. now this sicknesse growing from love, let us consider what love is.

It is an affection or motion whereby the will is inclined, with desire of some good thing, with a strong desire after the fruition of that good, which is propounded to the soule. The cause then by which the heart is stirred, is the goodnesse of some object propounded to the sense, and by the sense propounded to the heart. Now then wee may understand the cause of this sicknesse to be either.

First, The sence and feeling of Gods wrath due to her for sinnes, and the curse of the Law, according to that in *Psal.* 90. 8. where the Psalmist saith, *Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sinnes in the light of thy countenance.* Whereupon it is said, *The Inhabitant shall not say I am sick; the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquitie,* *Isa.* 33. 24. when their sinns were forgiven, their sicknesse was healed.

Hence, Observe.

That the apprehension of wrath due for sin, causeth sicknes in the soule.

Christ tels us, *That the whole need not the Physitian, but they that are sick,* *Matth.* 9. 12. Sin-sick sinners will enquire and seeke the Physitian of soules. The sence of miserie is the *primum mobile*, the first mover, that sets the soule in fainting and longing after Christ, for when the soule findes it selfe in darknesse without light, lying under the guilt of sinne, and not able

to deliver it selfe, this cannot but make it looke out for it selfe, and seeke with great importance for a Saviour. The Dove could find no rest for the sole of her foot, till she returned into the Arke. The Saints are very impatient of Christs absence; for he may withdraw himselfe for a while; he may withdraw his light and comfort from the soule, though he take not away his love; yet he may suspend the Acts of his love, he may seeme to frowne, he may so abscond and eclipse his love, that the soule for a time loseth sense, and feeles not its owne happinesse. Now when it is thus, Christ seemes to be gone, the comfort and assurance of his love is gone, joy and light is gone, O how dejected, how disconsolate is the soule then! It is a perfect hyeroglyphick or resemblance of *A wounded spirit*, as *Solomon* calls it, when the soule is full of perplexities and feares, and can see no comfort; then it must returne to Christ, as to its strong hold, there is my stay, there is my comfort, there I shall finde reliefe and refreshment, or else no where. Or else.

Secondly, Wee may take the cause of the Churches sicknesse the object, to wit, the sight of Christs loves, displayed by his banner, and by tasting of his banquet, even all the varietie of his sweet graces: now because her minde (which is the eye of the soule) could not sustaine the glittering shine of his love, no more then *Job* could shut up the Sea with doores, *Job* 38. 8. or *Agur* close up the winds in his fist, *Prov.* 30. 4. hereupon she is as one in a Syncope or fit of swooning, being overcome with the bright and glorious beams of his love; as it was said of the Queene of *Sheba*, (according to Historians) who had no Spirit

left.

left in her, because she was astonished at Solomons glorie, riches, wisdom, and the like: So here the Church having both sights and tastes of Christ love and sweetnesse, is as it were overcome with it.

Hence, Observe.

That the fulnesse of Christs love to his Saints, doth as it were, transport and overcome them.

The Church had been in the house of wine; banqueting with Christ; and under the displaying of the banner of his love, upon which she cryeth out, *I am sick of love*, I am overwhelmed and overcome with his sweetnesse, hereupon her heart was so much ravished with love, that she is love-sick, and ready to swoon therewith. Or,

Thirdly, Wee may take her sicknesse to be her exceeding love towards Christ, that her heart is so ravished with love towards him, that she is sick. Love hath a strong appetition of peculiarity, or private interest in the thing beloved: Here is a marvellous passion of love in the Church towards Christ: Now according to this interpretation, the similitude is drawn from hence, when a Virgine is betrothed, and through the vehemencie of her love towards her Spouse, is sick, and swooneth; a greater or a more vehement love cannot be.

Hence, Observe.

That the Saints love to Christ, is vehement and strong.

Here the Church is so taken and ravished with love towards Christ, that she is love-sick, and ready to swoone, and with a patheticall exclamation crieth out, as one that is ready to depart and dye, she desireth

reth to be refreshed with the sweet water of life, distributed unto her in flagons, and the sweet smelling Apples fetch out of Christs treasury, and both held and applyed to her, that by that meanes she might be, as it were recovered of her sicknesse. The faithfull soule tasting the sweetnes of those Apples, & of that heavenly wine, hath such a desire of Christ, as that she cannot by any meanes be satisfied without the enjoyment of him. Here then is a sicknesse, but not to death, but unto life and satisfaction. Christ himselfe pronounceth such *Blessed, that doe hunger and thirst after righteousness, for* (saith he) *they shall be filled, Matth. 5. 6.* The sweetnesse of these Apples which she tasted, and of that precious wine, brought her into this passion: yet her appetite and desire of them, is not any thing at all diminished, but she desireth to be more refreshed and comforted with those flagons of wine, and to have applyed unto her self those sweet apples of Christ. When Christ doth first lead a soule into his Wine-Cellar, and doth refresh it at the heavenly banquet of heavenly delights and comforts, he doth not distribute out a full measure of his spirit and grace, but as it were some taste, or small drops of them, which the Apostle calls *The first fruits of the Spirit, Rom. 8. 23.* And *The earnest of the Spirit, Ephes. 1.* Now by these drops the Saints are so taken and ravished, with the wonderful sweetnesse there is in those heavenly things, that they are insatiable in their desire after a more plentiful measure of them. Thus for the Churches request, with the reason thereof. Now followeth the fruit or effect of her request.

Verf. 6. *His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me.*

In the last Verse we had the Churches disease described, here we have the remedy. Shee called out to the Ministers of Christ to help her in the former verse, but it appears here that it is onely Christ that can apply cure: Indeed they be instruments, and no more, for Paul may plant, and Apollo may water, but it is God that can give increase, 1 Cor. 3. 6. It is Christ himselfe that is able to support his Church by his divine power. Hence it is the Church addeth to her former Speech, saying, *His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me.* So that though shee had called unto others for help, yet here she confesseth that all the efficacie is from Christ himselfe, declaring, that he doth stay her up with both his hands.

In these words, observe, The Churches declaration of Christs exceeding loue towards her: and this love of Christ appeareth in one generall act of favour, namely, his sweet embracing her, which embracements must needs argue love and favour.

In Christs embracement of his Church, wee have two particulars.

First, in his left hand conveighed under her head.

Secondly, in his right hand, amiably embracing her.

His left hand, &c.

Some understand it, prayer-wise, *Let it be under my head:* and then the Church prayeth unto Christ, for supply of strength and sustentation, and that he would comfort

comfort her heart by his word and Spirit, as a loving Husband doth his wife in her sorrow and sicknesse, for so the Apostle tels us, *That Christ nourisheth his Church*, Ephes. 5. 29. Seeing these things are spirituall, what may be meant by the left and right hand? for the resolution of this mystery, wee cannot bring in that of Christs right and left hand, spoken of in *Matth. 23*, because the left hand is turned to the wicked: but both hands here doe uphold the Church. Some understand by the left hand of Christ his *man-hood*, and by his right hand, his *God-head*. But I understand it here of whole Christ embracing of her, with both hands as it were, both his God head and man-hood, his life, death, resurrection, and ascension, even all that is Christs, is imployed for the good and comfort of his people.

The forme of speech may also seeme to allude to their feasts, when they lay on the ground, so that if any fainted, they put one hand under them to lift them up, and gave them some comfortable portion with the other. In like manner, Christ doth not leave his Church in her sorrow and sicknesse, but imbraceeth her with his owne hands, in the manifestation of all love, and mercy, and keepeth her safe from evil. Now if we take the words for a narration, then the comfort of Christs goodnesse and mercy is set forth in the refreshing his people by his word and spirit. But if wee take them prayer-wise, *Let him embrace me*, &c. then they hold forth the faith and thankfulnesse of the Church, because shee seeth Christ present, administering comfort to her, even in a fainting condition.

Hence

Hence Observe, First,

That it is in Christs power alone to support and comfort his Church, by the ministry of his spirit.

It is not in *Paul* that planteth, nor in *Apollo* that waters, but in *Christ*, that giveth the increase, 1 Cor. 3. 6. therefore though she had called to others for help, yet here she acknowledgeth all the efficacie to be from *Christ*, he doth stay her up with both his hands, when she is ready to faint.

Secondly, note.

That it is a marvellous comfortable thing unto the Church, to see Christ present with her, by his spirituall power and grace.

His left hand is under my head, as a Pillow for me to be refreshed on, when by reason of sinne the whole heart is faint, and the head is sick, then Christ doth comfort the poore afflicted consciences, in the forgiveness of sinnes, by the applying his owne righteousness, and the consolations of the spirit: So that the Saints can say with David, when my flesh and heart faileth, God is the Rocke of my heart for

R r

VERS.

VERS. 7, 8, 9.

I charge you, O ye Daughters of Jerusalem, by the Roes, and by the Hindes of the Field, that yee stirre not up, nor draw my love till he please.

The voice of my beloved; behold! he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.

My beloved is like a Roe, or a young Hart, behold! he standeth behind our wall, he looketh forth at the Window, shewing himselfe through the Lattesse.

IN the former part of this Chapter, wee have seene how Christ calling himselfe a Rose and a Lilie, giveth us to understand, that in him is the Fountaine of all grace, and the fulnesse and perfection of all sweet and heavenly treasures. Also, that from his sweetness and beautie, his Church is made so sweet and comely that she excelleth all other Daughters, as farre as the pure white Lilie doth the Thornes. Then she setteth forth the praise of her well beloved, by a like comparison; namely, that as the Apple-tree excelleth the trees of the Forrest: so doth he excell the Sonnes.

And further she declareth, that by the comfortable shadow, and fruit of this tree, she being led into the house of wine, she is made partaker of all heavenly blessings in him, and by the feeling of his love, she is sick of love towards him, calling for a further supply of grace, and is embraced, comforted, and supported by Christ. All which is contained in the first six verses of this Chapter.

Now

Now to proceed. In these three Verses we have.

First, A strict charge given, that this peace she enjoyed, may not be interrupted, verse 7.

Secondly, A Declaration of *Messiahs* comming, together with the discovery thereof, verses, 8, 9.

First, Wee have a vehement charge given to all the Members of the Church, *I charge you O ye Daughters of Jerusalem, &c.*

Secondly, The manner of the charge, *By the Rees and Hindes of thee Feild.*

Thirdly, The matter of the charge, *That you sleepe not, nor awake my love,*

Fourthly, The duration or continuance of the charge, *untill he please.*

Here ariseth some difficultie, to finde out whether it be Christ or his Church that giveth this charge; by some of our English translations, it seemes to be Christ, because it is read, *That you awake not my love untill he please*; for if it were the Church, she should say, *That you awake not my love untill he please.* But it is not very easily discussh'd by the Hebrew text: for the word *Ahabbah*, love, is feminine: and if the Church call Christ her love, the construction is with a verbe of the feminine gender. Some doe expound this charge to be Christs, which he should give unto the false Brethren, and false Churches, such as were degenerate Assemblies of *Idolaters*, that they doe not molest that sweet peace and rest of the Church, which she had obtained in him. But rather take it, to be the charge of the Church, not to her false Sisters, but

unto her companions, that they doe not by any miscarriage or rude behaviour of theirs, cause Christ to withdraw himselfe, or to hide or eclipse his love.

The reasons of this interpretation are,

First, The originall will indifferently beare either.

Secondly, She had authority to command, as shee doth in verse 15. saying, *Take us the Pexes, &c.*

Thirdly, The words preceding, and following after, are the words of the Church.

Fourthly, She doth apply the words unto the Daughters of *Jerusalem*, her fellow friends, unto whom shee often speaketh, as in Chap. 1. vers. 5.

Let us now descend downe unto the words in particular.

I charge you, &c.

שבע

Septem,

Inde Ni-

phal

שבע

intavit.

שבע

Cum, pun-

do sinistro,

satiatus

saturatus

fuir.

The Hebrew word here translated, *I charge*, signifieth to *sweare*, or to *adjure*, or earnestly to *charge*, &c. It hath also the signification of *seven*, which is a mysticall number, *Gen. 2. 3.* and some give the reason of it to be this, because an oath is confirmed by *seven*, that is by many witnesses. The word also signifieth to *satisfie*, because he to whom we sweare must be contented. An adjuration is neere of kinde to a curse, and sometimes one is put for an other, as appears in *Gen. 24. 7. Job. 6. 26.* Hence it sheweth the weightinesse of this speech.

Hence

Hence Observe.

That the Saints are very serious in the things of Christ.

Here the Church layes such a weighty and strict charge on the Daughters of *Jerusalem*. True, good, gracious, and heavenly impressions upon the heart, will be very strong and vehement in *expressions*, as here the Churches are, saying, I charge you, &c. Now followeth the parties thus charged.

O ye Daughters of *Jerusalem*.

By these Daughters, no question, the meaneth such as wished well to the Church, and had somewhat to do therein, such as were the severall Members of her. But though these Members are expressed by the daughters of *Jerusalem*, yet so, as thereby is comprehended all the faithful, wheresoever dispersed: Hence it is said, that the Law shall go forth of *Zion*, and the word of the Lord from *Jerusalem*, to other Nations and people, as the Prophet speakes, *Isa.* 2. 3. Wee had occasion to speake of the Daughters of *Jerusalem* already, in Chap. 1. 5. yet give me leave to add one thing, which I omitted there, namely, to observe that the Church is called by the name of *Jerusalem*, or the holy Citie. The Church may well be called *Jerusalem*, and that from such resemblances as these.

First, *Jerusalem* was the chief metropolitan Citty of the *Jewes*. So the Church hath the greatest advantage or precedencie above all other societies whatsoever, because unto her Members are committed the Ora-
cles

cles of God, as the Apostle speaks of the Church of the Jewes, *Rom. 3. 2.* unto whom also pertained the Adoption, and the glorie, and the Covenants, and the giving of the Law, and the service of God, and the promises, *Rom. 9. 4.*

Secondly, *Jerusalem* was eminenter then other places, for it is said, they went to *Jerusalem*, and down to *Egypt*, and other places: so the Church, is from above, *Gal. 4. 26.* because it hath its originall from above, and steeres its course towards heaven above.

Thirdly, *Jerusalem* was a Cittie compact in it selfe, *Psal. 122. 3.* So is the Church the body of Christ, compact and knit together, by joynts and legiaments, as it is in the naturall body: for so the Apostle telleth us, that The whole body (of the Church) is fastly joynted together and compacted, by that which every joynt supplieth for, *Ephes. 4. 16.*

Fourthly, *Jerusalem* is a free Cittie, and had many, Cittie-priviledges and immunities: so is the Church, *Gal. 4. 26.* *Jerusalem* (or the Church) which is above is free. The Law was delivered in a most terrible manner on Mount *Sinat*, and the effects thereof was nothing but bondage; but after it was sent out of *Zion*, and out of *Jerusalem*, with the Spirit of grace and adoption, and brings with it cherisofulnesse and libertie, so though ~~it~~ ger dereth to bondage, yet *Jerusalem* which is above is free.

Fifthly, *Jerusalem* was the seat of God, chosen from all places of the world, as appears, *Psal. 132. 13, 14.* For the Lord hath chosen *Zion*, he hath desired it for his habitation: this is my rest for ever, here will I dwell, for I have desired it. So the Church of Christ is his seate, where

where he dwelt, and holds forth the word of life, and distributes the rich treasures of grace and glory, and doth beautifie it with all heavenly excellencies and priviledges of salvation.

Synthly, *Jerusalem was the joy of the whole earth, Psal. 137. 2.* So is the Church, the joy and comfort of the world: what are all the men in the world besides? the Church is the seate of saving truth, and is built upon the foundation of the Prophets and Apostles, so that the Church is the depository of the truth, that orbe out of which this glorious light shines forth; and unto the Church pertains the Covenant, and the promises as you heard before. So much for the Parties charged.

Now wee proceed to the manner of the charge.

By the Roes, and by the Hindes of the Field.

Some render these words thus: *Tarry ye abroad with the Roes, or with the Hinde of the field.* Wee may understand it thus, *Tee that are by the Roes*, that is, yee that feed your flocks abroad in the Feilds, where the Roes and Hindes runne. The meaning may be this, get you abroad for a while, take your pleasure, and doe what you will, only disquiet nor, neither vex my beloved. This is spoken by the Church, after the manner of men and their wives, who when they would talke off secret matters, or take their rest and be quiet, will bid their Children and servants get them abroad, and recreate themselves, where they will, for a while. Indeed some take the words, as if the Oath were *by the Roes and by the Hindes*, which cannot be

פְּנֵי הַמִּזְבֵּחַ
In capitis.

be but improper and onely figurative, because Oathes and Adjurations are by the name of God onely, *Deut. 6. 13.* We may read it among the *Roes*, so doth *Arius Montanus*, rather then by the *Roe*, because the Letter *Beth* is here prefixed, which signifieth *in*, or *among*, more properly then *by*. The Church doth in her charge to the Daughters of *Jerusalem*; take these creatures, to wit the *Roes* and *Hinds*, as witnesses against them if they neglect their charge: an example we have in *Deut. 30. 19.* *I call Heaven and Earth* (saith *Moses*) *to record this day against you*, &c. This obtestation of Heaven and Earth, is meant the creatures in Heaven and Earth. We have the like expression in *Josh. 24. 27.* *This stone shall be a witness* (saith *Joshua*) *unto us, for it hath heard all the words of the Lord.* This figurative Speech is as much as if *Joshuah* had said to the people thus, this stone shall truly witness against you, if you shall falsifie your promise and Covenant, as if it had heard the words that were spoken.

Hence Observe,

That unreasonable creatures are called to testifie against men that deale falsly with Christ. Suitable to this is that in the Prophet, *Jer. 2. 12.* *Be astonished O yee Heavens at this, and be yee horribly afraid, be yee very desolate,* saith the Lord. Implying, that the very senselesse creatures, werethey apprehensive of such evils, would abhor such dealings, and tremble to thinke what the issue of them would be, or that such courses were such as might justly fill Heaven and Earth with astonishment.

And so in *Isa. 1. 2.* *Give care O Heavens, and heare O Earth,* &c. Because men are obstinate and senselesse, the

the dumb creatures are called upon as more ready to heare and obey Gods word then they, and are therefore witnesses for God against them. And in *Pfal. 50. 4.* He will call to the Heavens to judge his people, that Heaven & Earth may heare record. And in *Job 20. 27.* The Heavens shall reveale his iniquity, and the Earth shall rise up against him.

Let us consider the nature and condition of these *Roes* and *Hinds*, and then we shall see how fitly they are here brought in, in this obtestation or adjuration.

1. The *Roes* and *Hinds* are wild Beasts of the Field, and have their names of *Armies* and *Powers*: and by wild Beasts, the people of the world, who are not of God, are named: so that his people are admonished not to provoke Jesus Christ, least these wild Beasts among whom they live, should be made instrumental to afflict them.

2. These *Roes* and *Hinds* are set forth in Scripture for their swiftnesse of foot, as in *2 Sam. 2. 18.* which being referred to Gods judgements, may signifie the swiftnesse of Gods judgement on them that shal break this adjuration.

3. These creatures are also commended for their mutuall love one to another: by them is the love betweene man and wife set forth, as in *Prov. 5. 19.* Let her be as the loving Hind, and as the pleasant Roe, &c. That as the Males and Females of these Beasts doe dearly love one another, so is the unfeigned love betweene man and wife, and also betweene Christ and his Church; for Christ himselfe is likened to a *Roe*, or *young Hart*, in *Verf. 9.*

4. These Beasts are very much desirous of the highest

מִלִּיטָרִיָּה
Militia,
congregatio
populi, exercitus.

highest places: this is a property given by the Prophet *Habakkuk* to the *Hinds*, when he saith, *The Lord will make my feet like the Hinds, and he will make me walk upon mine high places*, Habak. 3. 19. So should the Saints walk on high places, and not remaine below on Mountaines of Earth, but we should Mount up to Heaven in our hearts, the hill of Gods holinesse, and of our happinesse, unto which *Paul* ascended in the vision of his soul, and unto which *Stevens* heart and eye was lifted up in the end of his Apology, because his defence was in the Heavens. All our Salvation, joy, and happinesse, commeth not from the Mountaines of flesh and blood, but from the Heavens.

5. These creatures were often made a prey, and over-reached by the Huntsman; therefore Christ himselfe is called *Aijeleth Kasbar*, *The Hind of the morning*, Psal. 22. 1. Who in that Psalm is extreemly hunted with Doggs of the Evening: so are all the Saints hunted by the men of the world.

6. These *Hinds* are very charitable one unto another: it is reported of them, that when they swim over a River, the first sustaineth the second, and the second upholds the third, &c. Thus the Saints are exhorted by the Apostle to beare one anothers burthens, and so fulfill the Law of Christ, Gal. 6. 2. Not looking every man on his owne things, but every man also unto the things of others, Phil. 2. 4.

Thus in some measure all the Saints may be likened to the *Roes and Hinds of the field*: not that they were to sweare by them, but for whose sake and by whose means they were to take themselves bound, as by a Solemne Oath, not to stir or provoke Christ by any miscarriage whatsoever. Thus far for the manner of his char

charge, now followeth the matter thereof.

That yee ſtir not up, nor awake my love.

The words may be read, *If yee ſtir, and if yee ſtir up, or, If yee awake, and if yee awake up*: for they are both of one ſignification, ſave they differ in forme, and being both referred to the Love after mentioned, they meane a ſtirring up more or leſſe. The word *If* uſed in Oaths and adjurations is a prohibition upon penalty, as in *Gen. 21. 23. Swear unto me here by God, If thou ſhalt lie unto me.* That is, that thou wilt not lie, as *Pſal. 89. 35. Once have I ſworne by my holineſſe, if I lie unto David.* That is, I will not lie unto David. And in *Mark. 8. 12. If a ſigne be given, which is explain'd in Mat. 16. 4. A ſigne ſhall be given.* And ſo if they ſhall enter into my reſt, *Heb. 3. 11. Pſal. 95. 11.* which the Apoſtle openeth thus, *He ſware that they ſhould not enter, Heb. 3. 18.* It is an imperfect Speech, where an imprecation is underſtood.

Stirring) is oppoſed unto ſleep, and quietneſſe, as *ſitting ſtill*: The Lord is ſaid then to ſtir up, or awake, when he delivereth his Church out of trouble, as in *Pſal. 78. 65. Then the Lord awaked as one out of ſleep, &c.* That is, he ſtirred up himſelfe to puniſh the *Philiftines*; whereas before he ſeemed to ſleep. And the Church then ſtirreth up the Lord, when it earneſtly prayeth for ſuch deliverance, as in *Pſal. 44. 23. Awake, why ſleepeſt thou O Lord?* ſaith the Church; but theſe things are ſpoken *Ad captum humanum*, after the manner of men, for properly, he that keepeth *Iſrael*, ſlumbe-
reth not, nor ſleepeſt not, *Pſal. 121. 4.* We may apply this unto the ſtirring & provoking of Chriſt by ſin, for which he doth often chaſtiſe and correct his people,

וּרְגַז
Vigilavit,
excitatus fu-
it.
Traſſitive
excitavit.

as appears in *Exod. 23. 20, 21.* Behold (saith the Lord) I send an Angell to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee in to the place, which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voyce, provoke him not, for he will not pardon your transgressions, for my name is in him. The Angell here spoken of, is Christ, as appears by this, that he hath power to pardon sin: and Gods name is in him, that is, he is essentially God: for Gods name and attributes are his very essence. So that the charge is not to provoke or stir up Christ to indignation by sin, or any miscarriage: It followeth the title here given unto Christ.

My Love.

This word *My* is not found in the Originall, but we may understand it *my love*, towit, Christ her beloved, who is called *Love*, by an excellency, as in *Song 1. 4.* Righteous persons were called *righteousnesses*. God is love, 1 *John 4. 8.* and is most worthy to be loved. The Church is called by the name of love in *Song 7. 6.*

Lastly, we have the duration or continuance of this charge.

Untill he please.

Untill it please) or untill he please, meaning Christ: and if we take it for provoking of Christ by sin, it is meant never: for so the word *untill* doth often signifie, as in *Isa. 22. 14.* this iniquity shall not be purged from you *untill yee die*; that is, never: and it is said, *Michal had no Child untill the day of her death*, 2 *Sam. 6. 23.* That is, shee never had any Child.

Or, it may be meant of Christ's comming in the flesh, and then we must take it thus: the Daughters

of

of the Lord
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and obey
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of Jerusalem are charged to suffer affliction under the Law, being shut up unto the faith that should be revealed, which Law was a School-master unto Christ, Gal. 3. 23. And the Church was as a Child in her non-age, under Tutors and Governors, under the Law, *Untill the appointed time of the Father*, Gal. 4. 1, 2. Now I say according to this Interpretation, they were charged to waite in faith and patience, unto the comming of the Lord, as it is in *Jam. 5. 7. 1 Pet. 5. 6, 7.* and not to provoke him by Murmuring, or otherwise, through feare or unbelieve. Now from this weighty charge, Observe,

First, *That we ought to be carefull not to disquiet Jesus Christ, whilst he seeks our quiet.* The Apostle adviseth us not to grieve the holy Spirit, adding this reason, *Because* (saith he) *by it yee are sealed unto the day of redemption*, Ephes. 4. 30. So are we also on the other hand to please the Spirit, as we would not turne away the Seale of our salvation. The Prophet tells the reason why the Lord fought against his people, *Because* (saith he) *they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit*, Isa. 63. 10.

Secõdly Observe,

That Christ is the Churches love. The love of the Saints may be divided and branched out to creatures, some love to one creature, and some to another, but all the streame of their affections meet in Christ, as the Rivers meet in the Sea, and as the Sun-beams meet in the Sun. As Christ eternall, exceeding, rich love is fastened onely upon the Church, for indeed his love grows and plants it selfe there: So a believers love is fixed onely upon Christ, as upon its proper and onely object.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, in that this adjuration is limited to the Beloveds will and good pleasure: if we take it for provoking by sin: Observe,

That our great care must be, not at any time to sin against Christ, to provoke him to wrath. Job saith that faire weather commeth out of the North, but with God is terrible Majesty, Job 37. 22. The meaning of it is this, that though the creature may be pleasing and flexible enough, and there may be faire quarter betweene man and man: yet not so with God; if he be once provoked, with him is terrible and dreadfull majesty: and thus it is said of Christ in the forenamed place, *Exod. 23. 21. Beware of him, and obey his voyce, provoke him not, for he will not pardon your transgressions, for my name is in him.* When we sin against God, we have a Mediator to goe unto: but when we sin against Christ we have no Mediator unro him, therefore it is a dangerous thing to sin against Christ, for then indeed we sin against a Mediator.

Lastly, if we take this limitation to the beloveds good pleasure, for his comming in the flesh, when the might injoy a greater manifestation of his presence: then Observe,

That the Saints are patiently to wait for those good things that are promised them in Christ. Here the Daughters were adjured not to provoke Christ by unbelieve, or impatience or murmuring, but patiently to wait for Christs appearance. Suitable unto this is that of the Apostle when he tells the *Hebrews* that *after they had done the will of God, they had need of patience, that they might receive the promise,* Heb. 10. 36. That is, they were patiently, without grudging or murmuring, to wait for the good things promised them. The Saints
that

that lived before Christs comming in the flesh, were to wait with patience for the day of his appearance: and so now the Saints since his comming in the flesh, must also wait for his last comming in glory, as we have it in the Apostle James. *Be patient therefore Brethren, unto the comming of the Lord,* James 5. 7. The word Translated *Patient*, signifies to be long patient, or to suffer with long patience: so that the Saints are exhorted to wait with patience and long-suffering, untill they receive the Crowne of glory which is laid up for them.

μακροθυμία

Thus far of the Charge given to the Daughters of Jerusalem, not to provoke or stir up Christ by sin, or to be impatient of his comming. Now followeth a declaration of Messiah's comming, together with the discovery the reof.

VERS. 8. *The voyce of my Beloved, Behold, he commeth leaping upon the Mountaines, skipping upon the Hills.*

VERS. 9. *My Beloved is like a Roe, or young Hart, &c.*

The Church still continueth speaking, either declaring her owne sense, or the actions of her Beloved: all tending to expresse the mutuall affections one towards another; and in respect of Christs neare approaching; either in the discoveries of his grace, or his comming in the flesh; the Spouse breaketh out and rejoyceth to heare the Bridegrooms voyce, and declaring this joy of hers unto her friends; she saith, *It is the voyce of my Beloved, &c.*

In

In the words we have uttered,

1. The Churches sense and feeling of Messiah's approaching in the gracious discovery of himselfe.

This sense and feeling of Messiah's approaching is laid downe.

1. From the knowledge shee hath of his voyce.

2. From the knowledge of his pace.

The voyce is made excellent by the subject, when shee saith, *It is the voyce of my Beloved.*

The Pace is made excellent.

1. From the word of attention, *Behold.*

2. From the speedinesse thereof, by saying, *He cometh leaping over the Mountaines and Hills.* Afterwards by comparing him in that respect, to the *Roe, or young heart,* in Vers. 9.

The voyce of my beloved.

By *the voyce* here is meant the word of Christs grace, and the Preaching of the Gospell, which the Church knoweth to be Christs voyce, and therefore receiveth it with joy: now in that shee doth acknowledge his voyce notwithstanding her former distempers. Hence Observe,

That the Saints doe and may discern the voyce of Christ, yea, and that in a weake and distempered condition. This is testified by Christ, when he saith, *Every one that is of truth heareth my voyce,* John 18. 37. And againe he saith, *My Sheep heare my voyce,* John 10. 3. And *they know not the voyce of Strangers,* Vers. 4. It is said of the Jewish Rulers that dwelt in Jerusalem, *that they knew not the voyce of the Prophets,* Acts 12. 27. That is, they slighted their doctrines, and hearkned not unto them. Hence it is said, *to day if yee will heare his voyce,* Heb. 3.

7. NOW

7. Now the Sheep of Christ they can discerne Christs voyce, they can (as Job saith) *tast words by the eare*, Job 12. 11. They have a spirituall tast, a discerning relish in their eares, because they have the Spirit of God, and therefore relish what is fuitable and agreeable to the Spirit.

But now the great Question is, *How we shall know the Voyce of Christ from the voyce of strangers? How shall we understand the word, and know the truth from error, light from darknesse, &c?*

For answer hereunto, consider.

1. That the Voyce of Christ hath a supernaturall power and majesty in it, which carries its owne evidence with it. How doe we know light to be light but by that evidence of light that it hath in it selfe? How doe we know fire to be fire but by that evidence of heat that it hath in it selfe? So the word and voyce of Christ carries such a majesty and power with it, to cast downe, to raise up, to kill, and make alive, that it carries its owne evidence in it selfe. Hence it is that the Apostle saith, that the word of prophecy doth judge and convince the unbeleiver, and it *makes manifest the secrets of the heart*, 1 Cor. 14. 24, 25. That is, the unbeleivers false perswasions of God, and his lusts and desires shall be discovered and convinced by the word. And againe he saith, *For the weapons of our warfare* (meaning the spirituall applying of the word to the resisting of their enemies) *are not carnall* (such as naturall men have recourse unto, and doe great things by: As namely, riches, friends, honour, eloquence, favour of Princes, and thelike) *but mighty through God, or to God*, for the accomplishing of his will, moving the heart, and convincing the Con-

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science

science by the Spirit, and punishing those that withstand the Gospel, by the pulling downe of strong holds, casting downe imaginations (or the reasonings of the soul) and every high thing that exalteth it selfe against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ, 2 Cor. 10. 4, 5. No adverse power being able to stand before the power of Christs voyce, or to withstand it.

2. The Saints have the Spirit of Christ to lead them into all truth, John 14. 16. That is, not simply and absolutely, but into all truth necessary for them to know, whereby they may judge and discern of the voyce of Christ: So that the Saints have a faculty to discern of such food as is agreeable unto them: and also to reject that which is not fit nourishment, and to let it goe. As there are in nature, passages fit for concoction, and digestion, and also for rejection; so there is in the souls of the Saints, to receive that which is whole. some food, and fit for the soul and Spirit.

Object. But some may say, How shall we out of our owne breasts, without the allowance and approbation of those that are learned, be assured that it is the holy Ghost that doth so guide us in the way of truth?

Ans. That whereas the Apostle Paul for assurance of our salvation, and that we are undoubtedly the Children of God, alledgeth, That we have received the Spirit of adoption, and that Spirit beareth witness to our Spirits, that we are the Children of God, Rom. 8. 16. Now it may as well be demanded of them, that feel this assurance in their souls, how they know it to be the true Spirit of God which doth assure them? which is to contradict the Apostle, and to deny the principles of Religion, against such there is to be no disputation.

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Saints. 13.
1. Ki. 22. 22.
2. Cor. 11. 13. 14.

The same Spirit which doth witnesse unto us, that we are the Children of God, and cannot deceive, doth also assure us of the true voyce of Christ, in the interpretation of the Scriptures, and it doth assure us so, that we cannot be deceived. It is true, that the naturall man (as Paul saith) perceiveth not the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishnesse unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned, 1 Cor. 2. 14. The divine writings of God will not stoop to the naturall spirit of man, neither will the divine Scriptures be understood, but of such as have received the Spirit of Heaven, and them unto whom the Lamb Jesus Christ shall unseale the Book of Life, Rev. 5. Therefore we must bring the Spirit of the Scriptures, for the understanding of the Scriptures, and he that is spirituell (saith the Apostle) judgeth all things, &c. 1 Cor. 2. 15. That is, the spirituell man discerneth and understandeth all things which are of God, and that belong unto eternall life.

Secondly, in that the Church saith, *It is the voyce of my beloved*, Observe,

That Christ is beloved of his Church in what condition soever shee is in.

Although the Church were weake and ready to faint, and felt but little divine assistance, neither had shee but small discoveries of Christ, yet shee saith, *It is the voyce of my beloved*. The Saints, even in spiritual deserts, when Christ hideth his face, and vaileth himselfe from the soul: I say, then the Saints are enough wel-pleased in Christ, though the tentation be full of amarulency and bitterness, yet in Christ himselfe there is abundant sweetnesse and satisfaction. Hence was that resolution of Job, *Though he kill mee,*

yet I will trust in him. Hence it is also said of the Children of God, That though they walke in darknesse, and have no light at all, yet they will trust in the name of the Lord, and stay themselves upon their God, Isa. 50. 10. Believers can say in the midst of feares, tentations, and afflictions, *It is the voice of my beloved.* Thus much for the Churches acknowledgement of her sense, and feeling of *my sauls* approaching, and gracious discovery of himselfe unto her, and that by the discerning of his voice.

Now followeth the acknowledgement she makes of Christ by his pace, which is preface with a word of attention, and after set forth, to be very speedy in these words.

Behold I he commeth leaping upon the Mountains skipping upon the Hills.

Behold! is a word of attention, of admiration, and of asseveration, as you heard in chap. 1. 15. Behold how my beloved comes running like an *Hinde*.

Hence Observe.

That the approaches and drawings neere of Christ unto us, is matter of great observation.

When the Prophet *Isaiah* foresaw Christ coming to assume flesh, he cries out, *Behold a Virgin shall conceive &c.* Isa. 7. 14. The Ancients saw Christ coming afarre off. *Abraham* saw his day and rejoyced; but when *John Baptist* commeth, he saith, *Behold the Lamb of God*, for the succeeding ages of the Church, the Saints beheld Christ ascending to heaven, from whence he first descended: surely it should be our worke to contemplate Christs approachings to us in his spirit, and in the

the gracious discoveries of himselfe unto us, in this last age of the world.

Thus farre the preface : Now followeth the manner of his comming, which is first set forth to bee speedy.

He commeth leaping, &c.

The manner of Christs comming, is set forth unto us by the similitude taken from the *Roes* and *Harts* (whereunto Christ is likned in the next verse) which are swift and speedy in their running, and skip upon hills and rocks : as the Prophet *Isaiah* speaking of the glorious effects of the Gospell, saith, *The lame man shall leape as an Hart, Isaiah 35. 6.* that is, he shall goe on evenly and straightly, he shall walke nimbly and cheerefully in the wayes of God. Hereby then is meant the speedinesse and readinesse of Christs comming, either to help and support his people, or else his comming in the flesh, when he would more fully discover himselfe in a Gospel-ministration.

Upon the mountains.

These words doe marvelously expresse Christs singular love, as though the Church should say, the danger of the journey, the hardnesse of the way, neither anything else as mans power, or the like, can hinder him from comming to comfort me : but he will passe all impediments whatsoever, as the sinnes of his people, and the opposition of the world, and the like. And that mountains and hils are thus used, may appeare, *Is. 40. 4.* the Prophet speaking of *John Baptists* comming,

ming, to prepare the way before Christ, saith, *Every mountaine and hill shall be made low.* So the adversaries of the Church are compared to a Mountaine, in Zach. 4. 7. *Who art thou, O great mountaine? before Zerubbabell thou shalt become a plaine.* So that notwithstanding the sinnes of his people, and the opposition of the world, Christ declareth his comming, by his voice, to comfort his people.

Hence Observe.

That nothing can keepe back, or separate Christ from his Church, his love is so great towards her.

There be as it were high hills and mountaines of sins, in the people of God, which might separate : and the Devill raiseth up bankes to make the way unpleasant, but he passeth over all these high mountaines : The Apostletels us, that his love is so abundant, *As neither death, nor life, nor Angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord,* Rom. 8. 38, 39. Hence it is, even from that unseperable love of Christ, towards his Church, she so glorieth saying, *Behold he commeth leaping over the mountaines, &c.* that is, he commeth without let or hinderance, though our sinnes be as great hills and mountains, which make a great separation or distance betweene us, yet he passeth over them all. The Prophet *Isaiah* compareth the pride of the Jewes, and their pharisaicall presumption upon their owne merits, to the mountains, as likewise too much dejection of minde, to the valleys, declaring, that by the preaching of *John Baptist*, to prepare the way of Christ, *Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountaine and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight* and

Ver. 9.

and the rough places plaine, Isa. 40. 4. That is such as in their owne conceit of workes, are exalted like mountaines, shall be cast downe by the ministry of the word; and such as are dejected and cast downe in their spirits, shall be comforted and raised up.

To the godly are incident smaller imperfections, which are common to all the Saints, and they are compared to little hills, according to that of the Apostle *We know that the Law is spirituall, but I am carnall sold under sinne*, saith he; for I allow not that which I doe, for, *What I would, that I doe not, and what I hate, that I do*, Rom. 7. 14. 15. And these smallest imperfections are great enough to separate us from God, were it not for Jesus Christ: But saith the Apostle, *There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ*, Rom. 8. 1. The Church doth yet further declare the manner of Christs comming.

VER. S. 9. *My beloved is a Roe, or young Hart: behold he standeth behinde our wall, he looketh forth at the window, shewing himselfe through the lattice.*

THe first clause of this verse, would better have been placed in the eight verse, it being the same for substance with it; and only an illustration thereof, we have the manner of Christs comming set forth, by a comparison taken from a *Roe, or young Hart*.

Christ in approachings, and drawing nigh to his Church, is first compared to a *Roe* for swiftnesse, because the *Roe* is a creature light of foot, as appears, 2

Sam.

Sam. 2. 18. And so is a *Fawne* or *young Hart*, as appears *2 Sam. 22. 34.* where *David* praising *God* for victories saith *He maketh my feet like Hindes feet*, that is, very swift and nimble. So that what the Church declares by this comparison, is, that *Christ* is swift and nimble, like a *Roe*, or *young Hart*, to draw neer and comfort her.

Hence Observe,

That *Christ* is ready, and maketh much speed to help and comfort his Church. Whither we take the meaning of the words for *Christs* approaching neer the soules the discoveries of his love and grace, or *Christs* coming in the flesh, for the more generall comfort of his Saints, yet in both, *Christ* is swift and ready, and delayeth not when the appointed time is come. *Christ* is more ready to helpe his Saints, then they can imagine, he is neer unto them that doe not thinke of him, and he is most strong when his people are most weak: Hence it is, that the Prophet crieth out in his extremity, saying, *Hast thee O God to deliver me, make hast to helpe me O Lord*, *Psal. 70. 1.* And againe he saith, *I stretch forth my hands to thee, my soul gaspeth after thee as a thirsty Land: Heare me O Lord, and that right soone, for my Spirit waxeth faint, hide not thy face from me lest I be like one which goeth downe to the pit: O let me heare of thy loving-kindnesse betimes in the morning*, *Psal. 143. 6, 7, 8.* And in *Psal. 9. 4.* *O satisfie us early with thy mercy*, saith the Psalmist; that is, early in the morning, after the darke night of afflictions. Thus the Church listening and looking after *Messiah's* approaching, shee having seene him, but as far off: now in the next words shee exulting-wise seeth and declareth him to be far neerer, and introduceth him in a familiar way speaking unto her.

Behold

Behold he standeth behind our wall, he looketh forth at the window, shewing himselfe through the Lattesse.

The Church doth here signifie a more neer communion with Christ then shee had before, when he was leaping upon the Mountaines and Hills; and yet not so neer, but the sight shee now had of him was imperfect; there was still a wall betweene her and him, which separated them. The Church within, doth see Christ but as under her walls, looking in by the windows and grates.

This neer sight, and yet imperfect sight, which the Church had of Christ, may be considered three wayes in respect of the impediments to the sight.

1. In respect of the *Wall*.
2. In respect of the *Windows*.
3. In respect of the *Grates*.

All which impediments were betwixt Christ and his Church.

Behold he standeth, &c.

Behold, is a word of attention, as you have heard in the former Verse.

He standeth.

Or he *waiteth*, or *ministreth*: for the word that signifieth to *stand*, metaphorically is put for *waiting*, or *ministering*. It is said in *Nehem. 12. 44.* that *Judah rejoiced for the Priests, and for the Levites that waited, or stood: that is, that stood and ministred in the Priest's Office.* And so in *1 Sam. 16. 21. 21.* *David came and stood before Saul, and Saul desired that David might stand*
730
Stetit, per-
stitit, mansit.
before

before him: that is, to wait and minister before him. This may well be applyed to Christ, who is the minister of the true Tabernacle, to wait and minister unto his people; he waits how, and when he may be gracious unto his Saints.

Hence Observe, That Christ waiteth to doe his people good. Standing is a posture of one that waiteth; Christ is often said to stand and wait upon us for our good, as Revel. 3. 20. *Behold I stand at the doore and knock, &c.*

Behind our Wall.

Some understand by this *Wall* the Incarnation of Christ, when he appeared in our flesh, *John 1. 14. The word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the onely begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.* For Christ incarnate, stood as it were behind the wall, because his God-head was hidden in his Man-hood: so that his deity being hidden under our flesh, he is said to shew himselfe, not fully, but through the windows and grates.

Secondly, others understand it of the wall of mans heart, for such an expression we have in *Jer. 4. 19.* the Prophet bewailing the destruction of the walls of the City, saith, *I am pained at my very heart: it is in the Orig. I am pained at the walls of my heart.* Agreeable unto this is that saying, *Behold I stand at the doore and knock, &c.* Revel. 3. 20. Meaning, at the doore of the soul. The heart is called a *Wall* and a *Door*, because of the power and Authority of it, it rules and swayes the whole body. As in Cities, the strength of the City is in the gates and the walls, & there were their seats of justice in ancient times, and there was munition stored up for war,

war, so that open the gates to the enemy, and you give them all. Now all the naturall senses and understanding of our hearts are as a wall to hinder us from Christ, till they be pulled downe, and made conformable to the will of Christ. The lusts and reasonings of our souls are called *strong holds*, that exalteth it selfe against the knowledge of God, 2 Cor. 10. 5.

Thirdly, we may understand by the wall, those ancient, legall ceremonies, called by the Apostle *a stop*, and the *partition wall*, Ephes. 2. 14. For Christ and the New Testament - Church, were parted by that wall of Sacrifices, and other Leviticall Ceremonies, during the continuance of that ancient Priest-hood. It was a joy to those under the Old Testament to see Christ standing behind the wall of oblations, sprinklings of blood and washings: and to see the light of the world, behind the Sanctuaries Lamps daily burning: such a sight of Christ was comfortable, though it was but an obscure and glimmering sight of him. This was the first impediment of the Churches sight of Christ.

The second followeth.

He looketh forth at the window.

Looketh forth, or *looketh in at the window*: this word Translated *looking* is found but three times in Scripture, and it signifieth to looke with diligence and observation, making dilligent search, looking narrowly, and with intentive observation. So that it noteth to us the care Christ hath over his Church, to see how shee doth receive his word.

The windows here mentioned may be meant of the opening and expounding of the word, whereby

שנה
Inde Hiphil.
השגה
Prospectus,
aspexit cum
confide-
ratione.

the Ceremonies were cleared up unto the people; to which windows the Prophet tells us, that the Lords Doves doe flie and flock together, *Iſa. 6. 8.* The wall was a stop, and these windows are a stay, but lesse impeding then the former. These windows were made (as the Temple windows were) for the letting in of light: that is, by ministring the knowledge of the Ceremonies, that so the people might know the end and use of them, who through them did contemplate and spiritually behold Christ as behind them: for what can a man behold through a wall but by the windows? This was the second dim representation of Christ unto his Church.

The third followeth.

Shewing himselfe through the Lattesse.

Shewing) or *flourishing*, or *bloſſoming*: that is, shewing himselfe as a flower, sweet, pleasant, and amiable, to shew, that Christ commeth not to his Church empty handed, but brings all graces with him. The Greek Translateth it *looking in*, according to the former word.

*Did not
partition*

The word Translated *Lattesse* or *Grates* is not found in any other place. The Greeks turne it, *by the nets*. The Chaldee useth the word for windows. This may be applied according to the windows, for Grates are also to let in light. Now by all this is shewed forth the manifold and diverse discoveries of Christ from time to time. 1. There is a wall of partition betweene Christ and his Church. 2. The Windows. 3. The Grates. The first kept them most a sunder, the second lesse, the third least of all.

Hence

Hence Observe.

That Christ hath let out his light unto his people, by little, and little, till by degrees he make the Sun of righteousness to arise upon them.

Christ did not at the first exhibite, and shew himself present unto his Church, but he standeth as it were behind the wall : thus Christ hath approached from the mountaines to the hills, from the hills to the Temple-wals : thence to the windows, and lastly, to the Grates or Lattice. In the times of the old World, he was upon the mountaines, a farre off : in *Abrahams* time, as upon the hills, something neerer in the discoveries of his grace : in *Moses* time behinde the partition wall of ceremonies, and legall rites : in *Daniels* time, as at the Windows : yet all the godly under the Law, saw him, but as under types and shadows : Now, the new Testaments age are beholding him through the grates, since his comming in the flesh; this the Apostle testifieth, *But wee all* (saith he) *with open face, beholding, as in a glasse the glorie of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glorie to glorie, even as by the Spirit of the Lord, 2 Cor. 3. 18.* Here the Apostle declareth, that the Gospel is full of light, transforming of us with its glorious beams; and that wee have a free access to God by the Gospel, which is not like the darke vaile, that *Moses* put upon his face, but pure resplendent glasse, wherein the glorious countenance of God is seene by us : and we are thereby renewed, & as it were glorified in our minds, according to the same image of God : and this worke of his is still in progresse here in this life, so as wee grow from grace to grace, and from glorie to glorie, untill wee be perfect as Christ is perfect. But yet the Church knoweth

Christ

Christ but in part; for we see him but *by a part* through a glasse darkely, for what wee shall doe hereafter; here wee see God but by reflections, as it were, and at second hand, as in Ordinances and in creatures, but then wee shall see him face to face: The Lord telleth *Moses*, that he will *speak* to him, *mouth to mouth, and by vision, and not in dark words*, Numb. 12. 8. Such is the difference betweene the knowledge we have of God now, and that wee shall have hereafter, as is betweene the propounding the same thing in the obscurity of a riddle, and declaring of it in plaine and familiar termes: or the seeing of a thing in its perfect shape, and the seeing of the shadow of a thing in a glasse.

Now the cause of this imperfect sight of Christ is not to be imputed to God, but to our Apostaticall nature, covered with the vaine of fleshly understanding, to which infirmitie of ours, God hath applyed himselfe, in shining out of his glorie unto us; yet so, as wee see but the image of his glorie in a glasse: neither can wee contemplate in that glasse, the pure and naked image of God, but it is clothed and wrapped about with an intricacie of words, and corporall significations, according to our understandings and reasonings: for the brightnesse of his glorie, no flesh can behold and live: but hereafter, *Wee shall know him as wee are knowne*: that is, wee shall know him fully and perfectly.

Thus much for the Churches rejoycing in her sight of Christs approachings towards her.

VERS.

VERS. 10, 11, 12. 13.

My beloved spake and said unto me, rise my love, my faire one
and come away.

For loe, the winter is past, the raine is over and gone,
The flowers appeare on the earth, the time of the singing
of Birds is come, and the voice of the Turtle is heard
in our Land.

The fig-tree putteth forth her greene figs, and the Vines with
the tender grape give a good smell: arise my love, my faire
one, and come away.

Here wee are to observe, a beginning of *Messiahs*
speech to his Church, which is continued to the
end of the 13. verse; and all this recounted by the
mouth of the Spouse, she taking upon her the person
of her beloved, as it were, declaring what words he
used unto her, who calleth her up to higher attaine-
ments, and to a more full communion with himselfe.
The Church heard Christs voice farre off, she saw him
approaching neerer unto her, and coming swiftly:
and now being come so neere (as through the grates,
he made himselfe knowne unto her) he answers
her loudly, and speakes more comfortably unto
her.

In these foure verses wee have.

First, Christs call unto his Church: yet uttered by
the Church herselfe: as she before had desired Christ
to draw neere unto her; so now Christ desireth his
Spouse

Spouse to draw neere unto him, in these words, *My beloved spake, and said unto me, rise up my love, &c.*

Secondly, Observe the reason given of Christs call; and that is drawne from the opportunity and fitnessse of the time for coming unto him.

First, Because the Winter is past, *ver. 11.*

Secondly, Because the Spring was come, *ver. 12. 13.*

Lastly, Wee have the former call and exhortation of Christ renewed, *verse 13. Arise my love, my faire one, and come away.*

First, we have Christs Exhortation to his Church; *My beloved spake and said unto me, arise my love, my faire one, and come away.*

In this speech of Christ unto his Church, are to be considered two things.

First, Those amiable Epithites given by him unto her.

Secondly, The words of his exhortation, and both these in this tenth verse, and for the rest, you shall have the particulars in their due place.

First, The Epithites or Titles given to the Church, are two.

First, *My love.*

Secondly, *My faire one,*

Secondly, The exhortation, *Arise thou, and come away.*

First, Wee have Christs speech, calling his Church from her present estate and place of affliction, unto a better, and more glorious condition: or from her carnal security wherein she lay, to follow him in faith and love of the Gospell, saying:

My Beloved spake, and said unto me.

Christ is the Churches Beloved: The Hebrew word *my beloved*, whereof comes David; in English, beloved, a terme given by the father from heaven to his Sonne here on earth, when he said; *This is my Beloved Sonne*, Matt. 3. ult. figured out by the ancient beloved, David. Christ is the Husband of his Spouse, and nothing will content a believer, but the enjoyment of the Beloved.

Spake, or answered, the word *Gnanah*, signifies so to speak, as is by way of answering. Arias Montanus renders it, *dilectus meus respondit, my beloved answered*. Now in that the Church saith, he answered, it doth not only argue Christs readinesse to help his Church, but also that there was some question or demand used before of the Church, whereunto this answer of Christ was framed.

תנן
Respondit.
I: signifies
also to sing
by tr. a. es,
when one
part an-
swereth
another
in singing.

Wee finde such sudden answers often in the Gospel, even before any question was propounded; *And Jesus answered and said, &c.* which some terme an Hebraisme, or forme of speech used of the Hebrews, even then, when no demand went before. But I rather thinke, that Christ answereth something, that the Church desired before.

Now wee must consider, that the Church speakes unto Christ two manner of ways.

First, By a vocall speech, whereto the voice of the bodie is required; and such speech as this, wee finde not divers times in the Gospel, nor here, whereto the answer may have relation.

X x

Secondly,

Secondly, The Churches speech is only *mentall*, which is only begotten in the minde: and Christ doth very often in the Gospell, frame an answer to the thoughts of his hearers, and so *Moses* was heard to cry, when he uttered never a word: and thus the soules of the Martyrs under the Altar are introduced, crying, *How long Lord, holy and true, Revel. 6.* . Now wee may guesse the Churches demand by the answer, which tends to the drawing of her forth of an uncomfortable condition, to a comfortable state; as it were out of winter stormes into a pleasant spring; her demand then (by Analogie of reason) must be this. *O my beloved Saviour, how long will it be, before I am delivered from this calamitie and bondage, when shall I be freed from the burthen of legall ceremonies, and from the rudiments of the world, and carnall Ordinances? When shall I be taken from under the School-master of the Law, that I may be no longer under Tutors and Governours? whereunto Christ answereth in effect thus, Even now is the time of the flourishing Spring, therefore arise and come away.*

Hence Observe.

That Christ doth answer every gracious desire of his Saints.

The Church had not uttered one word, but only desired more comfortable times, and Christ gives her in the answer of her desire, *The Lord prepares the heart, and heares the prayer, Psal. 10. 17.* The Lord doth as well heare and answer the prayer of the minde, and of the heart, as the prayer of the lips. *David's* purpose to build the Lord an house, was accepted as well as *Solomon's* actuall building of it.

Thus farre Christs speech in generall, containing Christs answer to the secret desire of his Church.

Let

Let us come to the Speech it selfe. And first of those two Epithites given by him unto his Church.

My love, my faire one.

My love, Or my fellow friend, my companion, familiar: so named of feeding together, and conversing one with another, and so partaking each of others good or evill. This title of love is often given by Christ to his Church, sometimes a Husband is called by this name, friend, as in Jer. 3. 20. there is mention made of a wife, *that deales treacherously with her friend*: So Christ gives a title unto his Church, suitable unto her, as she is his Spouse, and he her Husband.

Hence Observe.

That Christs love, seates it selfe in his Church.

The Church is the maine object of his love, it is united to that, and is not scattered to other objects: who can imagine what Christs love is to his Church; *As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you*, saith Christ to his Disciples, Joh. 15. 9. None can understand with what love the Father lov'd the Son: no more can any define and fully set out what Christs love is unto the Saints. The Apostle would have the *Ephesians able to comprehend with all Saints, the breadth and length, the depth and height of the love of God in Christ*: but yet for all that he concludes, *that it passeth knowledge*, Ephes. 3. 18. 19. And indeed there is no love comparable to this love of Christ, which is above the love of women, of father or mother, or any earthly love whatsoever.

Thus much for the first Epithite.

The second followeth.

My faire one.

פֶּה
Pulcer, el-
gans, venu-
stus.

The Hebrew word *Japheh*; *faire*, signifieth not one-
ly *faire* and *beautifull* in colour, but in comely propor-
tion and elegance, such as draweth love and liking.
The Churches fairnesse is by reason of the graces and
spirituall beauty of *faith*, *hope*, *love*, *patience*, and such
like graces, wherewith God in Christ had beautified
her. It is a very faire terme for the greater to give
unto the lesser, for Christ to give unto his Church:
yea, it is a signe of singular affection for Christ to give
unto his Church before shee was arisen, before shee
was comencer unto his presence. Hence Observe

*That the Church is exceeding beautifull and faire in
Christs account.* Hence it is he gives here such a soul-
ravishing title, *My faire one*, &c. It is a very high ex-
pression for Christ to give to his Church, but he who
knows best what the Church is, calls her *my faire one*.
But how comes the Church to be thus faire? Her
fairnesse is a derivative beauty, shee is faire and comely
in that shee is the Spoule of Christ, and cloathed
with the robes of his righteousness: for so soone as
ever we are united to Christ, our sins are upon him,
and his righteousness upon us, and therefore in Christ
the Church is comely. It is Christ that gives us life,
and puts excellent Ornaments upon us to cover our
nakednesse, and decks us with Jewells and Chaines of
gold, &c. and so we become beautifull in his sight,
Ezek. 16. 10, 13. It is Christ that cleanseth her by the
washing of water by the word, that he might present her
to himselfe a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle,
on any such thing, but that shee should be holy, without
ble-

Memish, Ephes. 5. 26, 27. So much for the two amiable Epithites given by Christ unto his Church; in the next place followeth his Exhortation, and that is laid downe in other two words.

Rise up, and come away.

Rise up thou) or rise up for thy selfe, and for thy good; sit not still under darknesse and superstition, lye no longer under the burthen of legall rites and ceremonies, for the time is comming on that thou shalt not be under rudiments and traditions, but under a more pure Gospel dispensation. Thus the Apostle bids us arise from sin, he saith, *Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light*, Ephes. 5. 13. That is, let us sit no longer in sin, but arise, that Christ may give us light.

קומי לו
Surge tibi.

Come away.

Or goe thou, or get thee away for thy selfe. As God said to Abraham, goe thou, or goe for thy selfe, Gen. 12. 1. signifying, that though no other would, yet he should for his owne good, get him out from that idolatrous place. The Church is not onely to arise and stand still, but being arisen, to come roundly away, as it is said of Matthew, that he arose and followed Christ, Mat. 9. 9. And James and John left their Nets and followed him. Now Observe from this Exhortation of Christ to his Church.

ורכי לו
Et abi tibi.

First, That there remaineth some lump of corruption in the saints of Christ. Else what need Christ call his Church from that security and Earthly-mindednesse, but that shee was willing to sit downe in this world, and to have her affections somewhat entangled with

with the cares and pleasures of the flesh. Hence it is that Christ calls her with his continuall voice sounding in her ears, *Arise, O thou whom I love, which art faire in my sight, and come away.* We are ready to mind earthly things, and to set up our rest here, but alas! the holy City, where is our freedome, is above: indeed worldlings are not moved at all with the voyce of Christ, for they can feele no tast nor sweetness but in worldly things, and it is death to them to heare the voyce of Christ to say, *Arise and come away:* they cannot willingly part with their treasure whereon they have set their hearts; that is to say, their Gold, their Silver, their Houses, and their Lands: but such are not worthy of Christ: but let all the Saints hearken unto Christ's voyce, and follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes.

Secondly Observe,

That Christ doth graciously invite his people to come from those things he would have them to forsake.. Arise, and come away for thy selfe, or for thy good. Thus the Lord calls to his people to come out from that darkness they were in, saying, *Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee: for behold the darkness shall cover the Earth, and grosse darkness the people: but the Lord shall rise upon thee, and his glory shall be seene upon thee, Isa. 60. 1.* When the Lord shined forth upon his people in more glorious discoveries of himselfe, he calls them away from their former condition: when the Lord discovered himselfe in a Gospel dispensation, his people were no longer to sit under the darke cloud of legall ceremonies. Therefore let us follow the Lords call unto any dispensation of his, and not to be over confident of our present ways,

we

we must remember the Lord did depart out of the Sanctuary into the Temple, and out of the Temple into the ministry of *John Baptist*, and out of *John Baptist* into that of *Christ* and his Apostles. We know not what the Lord may yet bring us unto; there are many glorious Prophecies yet to be fulfilled, and many glorious things are spoken of the new *Jerusalem* which shall descend downe from above, where there shall be no need of the light of the Sun, or of the Moon. If the Lord shall call us from those wayes wherein we have enjoyed God formerly, unto an higher dispensation: let us be willing to heare his voyce, and to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth: Our happiness lies not so much in this or that forme, but in the enjoyment of our beloved.

So much for Christs Exhortation to his Church: the Reason of his Exhortation followeth.

VERS. II. *For lo, the Winter is past, the Raine is over and gone.*

The Church had a longing desire after a neer communion with Christ, who had made some discoveries of himselfe unto her: now it remaines that shee draw neer unto him: to which end Christ useth quick Arguments to quicken her up to this duty: his motive is from the opportunity and fittnesse of the time, and therefore he saith first of all, *for lo, the winter is past, &c.*

Winter is a time of cold, hardnesse, storm, and tempest, when all things lye, as it were barren, under Frost, and Snow, and cold Blasts, there is no pleasure to be taken then: But in the Spring time all sweet
and

סרה
Inde.

סרו

Chal'd.
Hymns, rem-
pestas, plu-
via.

Exusu
Chaldeorum
Schind. in
Pentaglot.

and pleasant things spring and bud forth, whereas in winter all flowers and fruits are consumed, and as for travell it is difficult, and walking is unpleasant: therefore saith Christ, *Pray that your flight be not in the winter*, Matth. 24. 20 But in the Spring time all those things are pleasant, then there is the melody of the singing of Birds, then there is comfort and solace to be taken in walking abroad.

The Raine is over and gone.

Raine is over) or *changed*: that is, the stormes and tempests of the winter is past away and gone, and faire and pleasant weather come in the place. Raine in winter is uncomfortable to travell in, as in *Ezr. 10. 9. The people trembled, for the raine was great.* And in *vers. 13. The people were not able to stand without*, because it was a time of much raine. Showres and tempests are very troublesome to those that are abroad, or without doors.

These things may be apply'd,

First, to the bondage of sin, which may well be compared to the winter; for as a nipping winter deflowreth the beauteous face of a Garden or Orchard, so doth sin deform and rob a people of their beauty.

Secondly, we may apply these winter stormes and blasts to outward trouble and grievances in this life, by the malice and persecution of wicked men: as when *Israel* was under *Egyptian* bondage, and under the captivity of *Babylon*: such times as these were winter seasons, full of trouble and tempest. Now we may apply it unto the spirituall winter of Antichrists raigne and rage, after which we begin to see buddings of glory and liberty shine forth againe Thirdly

Thirdly, Wee may apply this winter to the menaces and shewing threats of the Law; and this I rather understand to be the right interpretation of the words; even as by the subsequent Spring, I understand to be mystically meant the Gospell.

Now looke how the winter is to the fruits of the earth, the same is the ministration of the Law to the soule.

The Law was promulgated with ensignes of feare, namely, with burning, fire, blacknesse, darknesse, and tempest: yea, so terrible was the sight, as Moses said, I exceedingly feare and tremble, Heb. 12. 18. 21. This stormie winter began with the Law in Mount Sinai, when Christ came in the flesh to publish the Gospell of joy and peace, the showres of judgement ended: or rather the showres were changed; from windie tempestuous showres, to refreshing showers of the Spring-time.

Hence Observe.

That the Saints under the Gospell, are under a more glorious and comfortable dispensation, then the Saints were under the Law.

Hence it is, that Christ useth this as an argument to quicken and stirre up his Church, to draw neere to him: namely, because *The winter was changed, and the raine gone.*

Now the niping ceremoniall impediments were removed, and a greater discoverie of love and grace manifested. The Apostle speaking of the New-covenant saith, *Now that which is old, (meaning the Law) is ready to vanish away,* Heb. 8. 13. that is, seeing Christ is come, and the time is now of the New-covenant, the Leviticall ordinances (which he calleth in another place

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carnal)

carnal) and all the whole forme of the legall Covenant and ceremonies, formes of worship are abrogated. And now saith the Apostle, in Heb. 12. *Wee are not come unto Mount Sinai, but unto Mount Sion, that is, to the Church under the Gospell, whereof Mount Sion was a Type, Psal. 14. 7. Hence it is that the Prophet Isaiab foretelling of the glorie of the times of the Gospell, sayth; And it shall come to passe (saith he) in the last dayes, that the mountaine of the Lords house, shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills, &c. that is, the spiritual glorie and grace of Christs Kingdome, shall be advanced above all worldly state and power, and saith he, The Nations shall flow unto it; and many people shall say, come ye, let us goe up to the mountaine of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, &c. Isa. 2. 2, 3, that is, they shall embrace the wayes of Christ readily, and spontaneously, with a free spirit, they shall not be filled with that terroure and amazement, as the people of Israel were at Mount Sinai; that when they heard the words of the Law, desired to heare them no more: but they shall say, He will teach us his wayes, and wee will walke in his pathes: for out of Zion shall goe forth the Law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem: That is, the doctrine of the Gospell shall be first preached in Jerusalem, and from thence sent abroad into all the world.*

Christ having used a motive to quicken his Church to come away, taken from the pleasantness of the season, to wit, the spring time.

Now let us consider the particulars, whereby this Spring is described.

VERS. 12. *The flowers appeare on the earth, the time of the singing of Birds is come, and the voice of the Turtle is heard in our Land.*

VERS. 13. *The Fig-tree putteth forth her greene figs, &c.*

Here wee have a particular description' of the Spring, by the flowers that appeare, by the singing of Birds, by the voice of the Turtle, by the fig-tree bringing forth figgs, and the Vines with their first grapes, casting forth a smell, &c. The perswasion being drawne from the comparison of the times. Wee are to consider how it stands in the mysticall sense.

First, Wee may apply this to the State of all the elect, before their calling, and then to their estate after regeneration. Before they be called, their hearts are even like the earth in winter, under the cold frosts and stormes of sinne, where can be nothing but bitterness and things unfavourie. After the Lord hath called them, there is a fragrance, and heavenly dew of all graces upon the soule, then the sweet flowers and wholesome fruits doe bud forth.

Secondly, Wee may apply the words to the state of the Church, under nipping frosts, and stormie threats of the Law: Now by the coming of Christ in the flesh, and the publishing of the Gospell of peace and glad-tydings, those winter showres were changed, from windy showres, to showres besecming the Spring, then there was abundance of spirituall peace

and joy in the holy-Ghost, even heavenly melodie, which is here represented by the springings of flowers, and the singing of Birds.

The flowers appeare on the earth, &c.

פרי
Floruit,
Effloruit.

The flowers, or, the flowerings appeare. The Hebrew word signifies any flourishing thing, in Ezek. 7. 10. it is used for the blossoming of a rod: By these flowers we may understand,

First, the Saints themselves, which now begin to hold up their heads, and of the fruits of the Spirit, whereby the elect give a pleasant smell: and whereby they are much adorned, and comforted. Thus when the Lord promiseth grace to his people, he saith, *Israel shall blossom, and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit, Isa. 27. 6.* Though they seemed to have been so grievously afflicted, that they seeme past all hope of recoverie, yet they shall settle, and thrive, and increase againe.

כארץ

On the earth, or, in the earth, which being drie and barren by nature, (being cursed for mans sake, Gen. 3.) is by the supply of the raine, and dew from Heaven, is made fruitfull: So are the Saints by nature, but are made fruitful by grace: Hence it is the Lord promiseth to be, *As dew upon Israel, that he shall grow as the Lillie, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon, his branches shall spread, & his beautie shall be as the Olive-tree, &c. Hos. 14. 4, 5, 6.* that is, as if the Lord had said, I will heale their backslidings and love them freely: for I will so water them with the dew of my grace, and heavenly blessing, that, they shall be like the Olive-tree, which is alwayes greene and flourishing as in *Psal. 52. 8.*

Hence

Hence Observe, First.

That the Saints in respect of their graces, are very sweet and fragrant.

They are compared to the flowers of the spring, which are appointed rather to savour unto, then to feed upon: all the gracious speeches, thanksgivings, and prayers, are as so many sacrifices of sweet smelling savour unto God by Jesus Christ. The Prophet Zeph. in ch. 3. 9. calleth it a pure language, which the Lord would give to his people under Messias, the face of the earth should be changed, by the calling in of the Gentiles, & by their sanctification in heart & tongue, when they should speake the language of Canaan, as the Prophet Isaiah speakes, Chap. 19. 18.

Secondly, Observe.

That the Gospell makes men that are barren by nature, to be exceeding fruitfull.

The flowers appear in the earth, &c. which was naturally drie and barren. Hence the Prophet Isaiah saith, The Wildernesse and solitary place, shall be glad for them, and the Desert shall rejoyce, and blossom as the rose: it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoyce even with joy and singing, &c. Isa. 35. 1, 2. that is, the Wildernesse, and the solitary place, or (as it is in the original) the land of driness, or drought; that is without moisture, shall be a most plentiful and beautifull place, by the glorie of Gods presence in his Church. And in verse 6. he saith, For in the Wildernesse shall waters breake out, and streames in the Desert; that is, those that were barren before, shall become fruitfull in grace and holinesse; Being (as the Apostle saith) Filled with the fruits of righteousness, Phil. 1. 11.

So much for the first description of the Spring.

The

The second followeth.

The time of the singing of Birds is come.

The time of singing, to wit, by Birds. The clause (*by Birds*) is not in the Originall, but is necessarily understood; seing not any other singing, but such a singing of Birds (as afterwards, namely of the *Turtle*) can here be understood, that being one glorious effect of the Spring. The old Latine turnes it, *Tempus putationis*, the time of lopping or pruning the Vines.

The Hebrew word *Zamir*, indeed sometimes signifieth, as it signifieth also a singing; as here, it cannot be taken for cutting, but for singing, because afterward we have Vines brought in with their fruit, and therefore cannot be the time of pruning and lopping.

Arius Montanus renders it, *Tempus cantus*, a time of singing.

Birds in Scripture are considered

Sometimes in a good }
Sometimes in an evill } part

1. They are taken in the evill part, *Matth. 13.* where the Birds of the Aire steale away the seed of godlineffe.

2. They are taken in a good sense, as *Levit. 12. 6.* where *Doves* and *Sparrows* are an analogical Sacrifice to God; as also in flocking of Fowles, for such supply of oblation, unto *Noah's Arke*.

Now for the first sort of Birds they are such as *John* speaks of in *Revel. 18.* they be a Cage of uncleane and hatefull Birds, whose Song is vanity and discord: but for the singing here introduced, intimates unto us the Song of Christs people, who feeling the comforts of the

the Gospell and of the Spirit, doe sing his praise; and with Psalmes, and Hymmes, and spirituall Songs, doe sing and make melody in their hearts unto the Lord, Ephes. 5. 19. The holy Ghost here alluding to the sweet accents of Birds. Let us Observe hence. First,

That the Gospell of Christ fills mens hearts and mouths with joy and praises. The Gospell is cal'd good tidings, Isa. 61. 1. And tidings of great joy, Luk. 1. 19. & 8. 1. Rom. 10. 13. And thus we have the Prophet, saying, They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing for the majesty of the Lord, &c. From the utmost parts of the Earth, have we heard songs, glory to the righteous, Isa. 24. 14, 16. And againe, speaking of the times of the Gospell, he saith, Then shall the lame man leape as an Hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing, &c. Isa. 35. 6. That is, they shall sing Songs of joy and praise to the Lord; when the Gentiles began to appeare a Church, then shee began to sing the praises of Messiah.

Secondly Observe,

That the ministration of the Gospell is much more comfortable then that of the Law. The Law was the ministration of the Letter, of death, and of condemnation: but the Gospell, of Spirit, of Life, and of righteousness, 2 Cor. 3. The Law was given with terrible sound of thunder, the Gospell in forme of delectable singing: the first Song was an Elegie or sad dump, the second an Eulogie, an Hymme, a Psalme of joy and gladnesse. The Gospell puts Songs of joy, and notes of delight into our mouths.

So much for the second description of the Spring. The third followeth.

The

The voyce of the Turtle is heard in our Land.

תור

Dispositio,
forma, &
genus.

This Bird in the Originall called *Tor*, which word appellatively is order, as if this Bird above others were a Bird of order. This Bird is a kind of Dove, added to the Desert and solitary places; true to his Mate, whose Song is mixed with sadnesse, in the winter season couched in some hollow Tree, coming forth in the Spring with his mournfull Song.

By this Bird is sometimes meant the Church, as in *Psal. 74. 19. O deliver not the soul of thy Turtle Dove unto the multitude of the wicked.* That is, deliver not the life of thy Church to be pierced by the wicked, shee being mournfull, weake, and timorous, and unable to helpe herselfe. And so the Church is called in *Song 2. 14. & 5. 2.* but here it cannot be meant of the Church, seing shee is stirred up to arise by the voice of the Turtle. What Bird of order can this be then, but that which was appointed for a burnt Sacrifice in *Levit. 1. 5.* even Christ himselfe, who during the time of the Lawes winter, was couched under shadows, and therein lay as dead; but when his Gospell was to be set up, when he should appeare in the flesh, and shew himselfe in our nature, then he sung personally to the Jewes, and to the first fruits of the Gentiles, afterwards by the glorious and plentiful mission of his Spirit: for thus Christ's Spirit is resembled to a Dove, as at his Baptisme, *Mat. 3. 16.* So then by the voyce of the Turtle Dove is meant the voyce of the Spirit, whereby they are refreshed, and doe mutually comfort one another, and doe jointly praise God with, and for his graces.

Hence

Hence Observe,

That the voyce of the Spirit of Christ sounding in the Gospel is very comfortable. And therefore the comfortable givings out of the Spirit in the days of the Gospel is compared to the voyce of the *Turtle Dove* in the Spring, who had hid her selfe in the holes of Trees all the winter before: So Christ that was hid under types and shadows, to appeare in the plentiful pow- rings out of the Spirit, this must needs be very com- fortable. The Spirit is called the *Oyle of gladnesse*, *Plal. 45.* And the *Comforter*, *John 14.* and all the ef- fects of the working of the Spirit in the soul, are of joy and peace; and the joy of the Spirit is like the intercession of the Spirit, *unspeakable and glorious*, as the Apostle speaks, *1 Pet. 1. 8.*

Thus we have the first part of Christs Spring de- scribed.

1. By the flowers.

2. By the singing of Birds.

Now followeth some further fruits of the Spring, represented to us by the Trees fruit. 1. Of the Fig- tree. 2. Of the Vine-tree, and these fruits make up the Springs perfection, and stand for a prologue to the Summer season, as in the following words.

Ver. 13. *The Fig-tree putteth forth her Greene Figs, and the Vines with tender Grapes give a good smell: arise my love, my faire one, and come away.*

For the Fig-tree, Christ maketh the budding there- of a signe of the Summers approaching, and also of a fruitfull yeare following. *Learn a Parable of the Fig-*

Z z

tree

tree (saith he) when her branch is yet tender, and telleth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh. Mat. 24. 32. And thus doe we count the Fig-tree amongst the Trees that are of quick nature, for that the time of young Figs appearance, must argue the forwardness of the Spring, ready to entertaine Summer. Now the blessed effects of the Spirit and grace of Christ upon his Church, is manifested by the Fig-tree, when the Lord threatneth destruction by the Prophet, he saith, *There shall be no Grapes on the Vine, nor Figs on the Fig-tree, &c.* Jer. 8. 13. So that when the voyce of the Spirit shall be heard as the voyce of a Turtle Dove, then the Saints shall be fruitfull, as Fig-trees in the time of summer.

The second Trees fruit followeth.

And the Vines with tender Grapes give a good smell.

Grapes of themselves casting no savour, it must necessarily be understood of that time, wherein there be small Grapes budding forth, and flowers or blossoms falling off, which flowers give a true pleasant odour, and therefore shee saith, *The Vine with the tender grape, &c.*

The young or small grape, called in the Original *Smadar*, a word used not above three times in Scripture. By this variety of fruit is signified the graces and fruits of the Spirit in the Saints, in the dayes of the Gospell, and of more plentiful effusions of the Spirit then before: when the Saints are reconciled unto God by Christ, the sweet odour of their graces are like the buddings of the Fig-tree, and the Vine. The people of God are likened to Grapes and Figs, as in Hos. 9. 10. *I found Israel like Grapes in the wilderness,*
I saw

I am your Father, at the first ripe in the Fig-tree, at her first time. It is noted of some, that the Fig-tree bears fruit three or foure times a yeare. Now in that he saith they were like the first ripe in the Tree, it noteth the forwardnesse of the Saints to bring forth fruit, even as the Fig-tree that hastens to bring its first fruit, that it may hasten to bring forth more fruit. Now in that the Saints are likened to the Fig-tree, and to the Vine for fruitfullnesse.

Hence Observe,

That the Spirit by a Gospell ministration makes the saints to abound in all fruitfullnesse. The Apostle tells us of the fruits of the Spirit, in Gal. 5. 22. *Eat the fruit of the Spirit* (saith he) *is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentlenesse, goodnesse, faith, meeknesse, temperance, &c.* The Saints abound in such fruits as these; they are such as bring forth fruit unto God, Rom. 7. 4. Now the Saints in respect of their fruitfullnesse in grace, may well be assimilated unto the Fig-tree, and the Vine.

First, the Fig-tree bears fruit very often, at least foure times a yeare; and *Plinio* saith of the *Egyptian* Fig-tree, that it brings forth fruit by the very stock, not by the Branches. So are the Saints very fruitfull in holinesse and righteousness, and therefore they are called by the Prophet, *The Trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified*, Isa. 61. 3. that bring forth much fruit to his glory. And Christ saith unto his Disciples, *Herein is my Father glorified, in that yee bring forth much fruit*, John 15.

The second note, that the naturalist observeth of the fig-tree is, that when it is cut downe and cast into the water, it presently sinketh being drie, but when it is thoroughly steeped in the water, then it will rise

Plin. Lib. 13. Cap. 7.

Idem, Lib. 13. Cap. 7.

again; contrary to the nature of other trees, who in their drinesse swimme, and when they are thorough wet, then they sinke to the bottome. Thus it is with the Saints, when they are first cast into the water of affliction, they begin to sinke, as *Peter* did, when he walked upon the Sea with *Christ*: but when they have been long in affliction, and more exercitate, that have been as it were tried Soldiers, such as have their senses well exercised, or school'd, as the Apostle saith; such I say, never will utterly sinke in their trouble, but they can beare reproaches and persecutions for *Christs* sake, and when they are weake in themselves, then they are strong in him, and more then conquerours.

Thirdly, It is further reported of the figg-tree that, *Scalpendo tantum ferreis unguibus aliter non maturescit*, it will not ripen any otherwise, then only by scratching it with Iron hockes or rakes: and it being so scratcht, it will bring forth seven fold, saith *Plinie*. Such is our nature, that it will not bring forth any fruits unto righteousness; unlesse it be quickned and stirred up by the Word and Spirit of God. Wee shall never be fruitfull trees in *Christs* Orchard, unlesse we be pruned by the Father, unlesse he purge us, and make us bring forth fruit, as *Christ* speaketh, *Joh. 15*. So much of the fig-tree: now followeth the simile of the Vine.

First, A Vine is good for no use, if it beare not fruit, for so saith the Prophet, *Ezek. chap. 15. 1, 2*. The Vine-tree is for his wood, lesse regarded for building, then any Tree of the Forrest, insomuch as none will make a pin thereof to hang any Vessel thereon, but rather cast it into the fire and burne it. Wee may apply this to our selves, for what substantiall thing is in our nature

nature, that may be depended upon? he that makes any naturallabilitie, as a pin to depend on, will leane on a broken reed.

Secondly, A Vine is very fruitfull, it brings forth abundance of grapes, as appeares, Psal. 128. 3. and Ezek. 32. 12. So the Saints are made exceeding fruitfull, by the flowings out of the Spirit of Christ upon their hearts.

Thirdly, The Vines, and their fruit come to nothing, except they be underproped and lift up from the earth: so it is with the Saints, both they and their fruits come to nothing, unlesse Christ underprop them by his power, spirit, and grace: but being underproped by the flagons of Christ, and by the distributions of his grace, they become very fruitfull.

The Spring thus described: First, figured by flowers and Birds singing.

Secondly, From the budding and sprouting forth of the fig-tree and the Vine, wherein is set forth the gracious and pleasant voice of Christ in the Gospell, with all the effects and fruits thereof upon the Saints: Now it remaineth that wee speake of the exhortation subjoyned.

Arise my love, my faire one, and come away.

This exhortation is the same, that wee had in the tenth verse aforegoing, and therefore the lesse may be said of it now: only two things we may note from the iteration of this exhortation.

First, It notes the backwardnesse of our natures, and the untowardnesse of our hearts, for yeilding unto Christ.

Christ; and therefore the Lord doth graciously call his people againe and againe to come up to a more full enjoyment of himselfe.

Secondly, It notes his exceeding great love, and rich mercie, that doth call us to arise from the evil wherein we lay captivated by sinne, and from the winter blast of the Law, even from the curse and bondage thereof, and also he calleth us into the glorious liberty of the Sonnes of God: so that in all our troubles and tentations, wee may come to him, and finde rest, where wee may sweetly enjoy our selves in him: all which is represented to us, by the flourishing and joyfull time of the Spring; which Christ useth as a motive, to perswade us to come unto him.

VERS. 14, 15.

O my Dove! that art in the clefts of the Rock, in the secret places of the stairs: let me see thy countenance, let me heare thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.

Take us the Foxes, the little Foxes that spoile the Vines: for our Vines have tender grapes.

THe Church continueth here in her repetition of Christs speech unto her, which speech begun verse 10. In which wee may Observe.

First, An exhortation.

Secondly, A reason thereof.

The

The exhortation is given forth unto us :

First, In a description of the Church.

Secondly, In the thing exhorted unto.

The description lieth.

First, In a sweet and friendly compellation given by Christ unto his Church, *My Dove*.

Secondly, In a description of her dwelling place.

First, In saying, *Thou art in the holes of the Rock*.

Secondly, In adding, *In the secret of the stairs*.

The thing exhorted unto, is the Churches manifestation of her selfe.

First, In saying, *Shew me thy face*,

Secondly, In adding, *Canst thou heare thy voyce*.

The reason of this exhortation is drawne from the Churches excellent qualification, and this is laid down in a twofold assertion.

First, he saith, *For thy voice is sweet*.

Secondly, he concludeth, *And thy face is comely*.

As for the next exhortation in the 15. verse you shall have the resolution in its due place.

Now to the exhortation, and the parts thereof.

My Dove, &c.

Christ here calleth the Church a *Dove*; a title sometimes attributed unto Christ himselfe: the Holy-ghost sometimes appeared on Christ in the shape of a Dove, to discover unto us thus much, that Christ should have the properties and disposition of a Dove, as meeknesse and gentlenesse, for indeed he became man for that end, to be a mercifull Saviour. *I will not quench the smoking flax, nor breake the bruised reed*, saith he, *Matth. 12. 20.* So that the mercifulnesse of Christs nature, and

and the mercifulnesse of his Office is set forth by the resemblance of a Dove. Now as Christ had the Spirit in likenesse of a Dove: so all that are Christs, to wit, the Spouse of Christ, have the disposition of Christ: that Spirit that framed Christ to be meeke, and gentle like a Dove, doth also frame the Church into the same likenesse and disposition: hence he saith, *My Dove, &c.*

Observe hence.

That as Christs, so is the Churches temper and disposition framed after the likenesse of a Dove.

Now wee must know, that there is some good in all the creatures: there is a beame of Gods majesty, and an image of vertue, even in the inferiour creatures, wherefore the Scripture sends us to such creatures for many excellencies, that are to be found in them. Now the Church may well be compared to a Dove, and that for such properties as these.

First, The Dove is a mournfull creature, and therefore Hezekiah saith, *I did mourne like a Dove, Isa. 38. 14.* And the Jewes are said to *mourne like Doves, Ila. 59.* and it is said of those that should repent, that they should *mourne like Doves, Ezek. 7. 16.* This was Davids condition, in *Psal. 120. 5. Woe is me that I sojourne in Mesch: that I dwell in the Tents of Kedar.*

The State of the Saints is like Doves, who mourne to God in their desertions, afflictions, and tentations, who heares the bemonings of his owne Spirit in them.

Secondly, A Dove is an innocent, harmelesse creature, & simple, without guile: hence the advice of Christ is to his Disciples, *Be innocent as Doves, Matth. 10.* Now there is a simplicity that is sinfull, when there is no mixture of wisdom in it: for it is said in *Hos. 7. 11.*

Ephra-

Ephraim is like a silly Dove without heart, they call to Egypt, they go to Assyria: that is, when they did rely more upon friends, and outward helps, then upon God: But there is also a pure, holie simplicity, and so God is said to be simple, because there is nothing in him contrary to himselfe, or to his owne nature. In this respect, the Church may be said to be like the Dove, in respect of a good and holie simplicitie, when there is no mixture of fraud, no duplicity in the soule; A double hearted man is unconstant, and unstable in all his ways, saith the Apostle, Jam. 1. 8.

Thirdly, The Dove is weake and impotent, not being able to help her selfe against the Birds of prey: it hath nothing but flight: So the Saints are unable to defend themselves, but only they can flye to God as to their mountaine, and flye to Christ as to their Arke and strength, for they have no other refuge then God, nor any hiding place besides Christ.

Fourthly, The Dove is a very weake creature: Hence it is said of Ephraim, that He shall tremble as the Dove, out of the Land of Assyria, Hos. 11. 11. So the Saints are called, The meeke of the earth, Zeph. 2. 1, 2, And wee are exhorted by the Apostle, As the Elect of God, to put on the bowels of meeknesse and compassion, &c. Colos. 3. 12. Because this grace disposeth us to a nearer communion with God then other graces: it is a grace that God much delights in, and would have all his Saints adorned with, as is manifest in 1 Pet. 3. 4. it is the best jewel or ornament, that the Saints can be adorned withall, because it empties the soule of all fleshly conceits, and so makes it the more capacious to receive any good from God.

A a a

Fiftly,

Fifthly, The Dove is loving, chaste, and faithfull to her mate, alwayes keeping close unto her: So the Saints, they will not leave Christ to turne to Idols. It is reported that in the dayes of Julian, when Idols were set up in every corner of the Christians Temples, yet then they made a shift to turne their eyes from beholding them. The believing soule is faithfull to Christ, and will set up nothing in the heart above Christ: *Whom have I in Heaven but thee? (saith David) and where is there in earth that I desire besides thee? Psal. 73. 25.* The Church is brought in like a chaste virgin contracted, and her Members to be such as follow the Lamb where soever he goes, for they have not defiled themselves with men, Revel. 14. 4. that is, those that are chaste to Christ, have not defiled themselves with idolatrie and spirituall fornication.

Sixthly, The Dove is a cleanly Bird, and it feedeth cleanly upon pure graine, and will not lodge but in a cleanly place, where it may not be annoyed with any unfavourie stench, and the like: so it is with the faithfull soule, it will not feed upon the dung or dogmeat of this world, or on sinfull pleasures, but upon Christ and spirituall things. The carnall man useth to feed upon dust, and earthly things, when as the faithfull soule, that hath tasted the heavenly *Manna*, it will not feed upon that which is base and earthly, neither can it indure to feed upon mens inventions or lying legends, but it loves to feed upon the pure word of God, and upon heavenly and spiritual things.

Seventhly, The Dove is a Bird that loves communion and fellowship, as the Prophet speaks, *Who are those that flock to the windowes like Doves, Isa. 60. 8.*

For

For so they use to flock to their houses by companies : So the Saints love to have fellowship with the Father, and the Sonne, as the Apostle *John* speaks, and also they love to have communion one with another. *Doves* will consort with *Doves* : so will Saints have communion with Saints and none else.

Eightly, and lastly, the *Dove* is a low priz'd creature, as appears by that allowance under the Law, that they who could not compass a Lambe, might offer a paire of *Turtle-Doves*, and yet by the reason of the apparition of the spirit in the likenesse of a Dove, it is stamp'd with no small worth and excellencie : So the Saints are of very low esteeme in the world, and lightly accounted of: but in regard of those spirituall and divine appearances of God in their soules, they become of great worth, and excell in divine excellencie ; so saith the wise man, *The righteous are more excellent then his Neighbour*, Prov. 12. 26.

Thus I have touch'd upon some properties of the Dove, unto which Christ doth resemble his Church, and so farre of the loving attribute given by Christ to his Church, in saying, *my Dove*, &c. Now followeth the second thing in this description of the Church, to wit, the manifestation of her mansion place, and that first in saying.

That art in the Clefts, or holes of the Rock,

Some understand this Rock to be the Churches station, or abiding place in the day of distresse and persecution ; who then hideth her selfe from danger, as the Dove hideth her selfe in the Rocks, as it is said, *O yee that dwell in Moab, leave the Cities and dwell in the Rocks,*

and be like the Dove that maketh her nest in the side of the holes mouth, Jer. 48. 28. But we may understand this Rock mystically to be meant of Christ, who is the Rock of the Churches salvation, as the Psalmist often expresseth. Christ was typified by the Rock in the Wildernesse, as appears, 1 Cor. 10. 4. But for the clefts or holes of the Rock, they seeme to insinuate the secret counsell of God sealed up in Christ concerning the election and calling of the Gentiles: and those elect Gentiles did as it were, lodge in the eternall decrees of God in Christ, all the time of the legall winter: The Apostle saith that God hath elected us in him before the Foundation of the World: And the same Apostle tells us in Gal. 3. 23. That we (meaning both Jew and Gentile) were kept under the Law, and shut up unto the faith, which should afterwards be revealed. So that the Church before her calling had her abode in Christ; yea, within the secret stairs and lodgings of Christ. The second manifestation of the Churches mansion place followeth.

In the secret places of the stairs.

The word Translated *secret* signifies a hiding place, by which is meant a hiding place in the Rock. Thus David often calleth God his secret or hiding place; as in Psal. 32. 7. saying, Thou art a hiding place to me, from distresse, thou wilt preserve me, &c. And it is said, that the godly shall dwell in the secret place of the most high, Psal. 91. 1. That is, under the glorious shadow and protection of the most high.

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inde. Of the stairs) or a steep place, as it is in the Original; this, as the Rock, is to be applied unto Christ, by whom

whom we ascend unto God, as it were by degrees, as
by steps and stairs. Christ is to the Saints as *Jacob's* מדרגה
Ladder which he saw in the Vision, upon which the *Gradius*
Angells of God ascended and descended, Gen. 28. 12. *Præcipitium.*

John 1. 31. Christ is both our hiding place and steep
Rock, where we may ascend to God the Father, it is
through him we have any access to God. The
Church was bashfull by reason of sin and the like; but
now for her encouragement Christ calls unto her to
a more communion with himselfe, with this descrip-
tion and motive, *O thou my Dove, that art in the clefts of*
the Rock, and in the secret of the stairs. That is, thou
that art put into the Rock of Salvation, by whom
thou mayest ascend up to me, as by steps, and stairs;

Hence Observe,

That it is Christ alone in whom we may make our safe ap-
proches unto God. Christ had called his Church to
come unto him; now shee being disheartened because
of sin and wrath, he againe exhorts her to let him see
her face, and heare her voyce, and gives her this en-
couragement, *O thou in the cleft of the Rock, &c.* The
Lord tells *Moses*, *That no man can see his face, and live,*
We may see *Jehovah's* back-parts, but his face; that is,
an immediate view of his absoluteness and perfection
cannot be seene; and therefore he is called the *invisi-*
ble God, but in Christ we have a manifestation of God,
whereof we have a figure in *Moses*, *Exod. 33.* The
Lord proclaimed his mercy, his patience, his good-
ness, his truth, and justice before him, these are his
back-parts, and more then these he could not see: and
therefore it is said, that *the Lord covered Moses with his*
hand, while he passed by: But where was *Moses* when he
had

had this Vision and appearance of God? He was in the
cliff of the rock. Now verily that Rock was a shadow
 of Christ, we see the glory, goodnesse, and face of God
 through him, *Per Speculum*, as it were in a glasse. Christ
 is the *living image of God*, 1 Cor. 4. 4. The brightnesse
 of his glory, and the expresse Character of his person, Heb. 1. 3.
 There is no excellency in the Father but it is in the
 Son, and by the Sonne we come to enjoy it, so saith
 the Apostle, God who hath commanded light to shine
 out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the
 knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, 1
 Cor. 4. 6. Both this expression, and that in the He-
 brews before mentioned, where Christ is called the
 brightnesse of Gods glory, are a metaphor taken from
 the beams of the Sunne: as the Sun is manifested by
 his owne brightnesse, viz. by his Beams, for we can
 not see the Sun *in situ*, in his Charriot, or circumvo-
 lution, but by his Beames: so the inaccessible light of
 the Fathers glory is revealed, *Tanquam per radios in
 splendorem*, as it were by beams and brightnesse, shin-
 ing most clearly in Christ, and the Fountaine and
 root of that brightnesse is in Christ's God-head, be-
 darted upon us through the Man-hood, according to
 the testimony, John 1. 18. No man hath seen God at any
 time, the onely begotten Sonne, which is in the bosome of the
 Father, he hath declared him. The bosome is the
 place and seat of secrets: now it is Christ onely that
 opens the bosome, declares the secrets, and reveals
 the glory and brightnesse of Gods face unto us. In a
 word, all our happinesse, safety, and glory, lies in
 Christ: if we be in the Rock, we sit in heavenly places
 with Christ, Ephes. 1. 3. And we are in Christ, Ephes. 1.
 1. 1 Cor. 2. 1. And our life is hid with Christ in God,
 Col.

Out 3. 3. And by him we have access to the Father, as it were by steps and stairs.

So much for the description of the Church, in respect of her mansion or dwelling place. Now follow the thing free is exhorted unto, with the Exhortation annexed.

Let me see thy countenance, let me heare thy voyce, for sweet is thy voyce, and thy countenance is comely.

Christ having awaked his Love, he now exhorteth her to a more neer fellowship and communion with himselfe: and that first by saying,

Let me see thy Countenance, &c.

Let me see, or *cause me to see thy aspect, thy visage, thy form and fashion:* that is, stir up thy faith, and hold up thy face, shew me thy Countenance boldly, with joy and comfort; looke upon me, as it were with open face, and see my glory, contemplate upon my excellency and goodnesse: and in this manner doth Messiah call the Church to a neer and sweet communion with himselfe.

Hence Observe,

That the Saints with faith and boldnesse have access unto the Father, through Christ their Mediator. Hence it is that the Spouse being in the Rock (by which is meant Christ, as was shewed before) is bid to come, and unweild her face, and to take a view of the glory of God in Christ. And this is that which the Apostle declares, saying, *But we with open face beholding as*

תִּנִּי
Vidit, mult-
fit, praeclari-
aspexit, pro-
spexit. Inde.
מִרְאָה
Visio, visus,
aspectus,
species.

in a glasse, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same Image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord, 2 Cor. 3. 18. This expression is taken from an allegory of the covering wherewith Moses veiled his face when he appeared before the Lord, Exod. 34. 33. And by that beholding of God, had his face lightned, and shining with beams. So have the Saints a free access unto God by Christ, which is not as a darke vail, but a pure resplendent glasse, wherein the glorious countenance of God is seene by us; and we are thereby renewed, and as it were glorified in our minds, according to the same Image of God, in holinesse and integrity. And againe the Apostle tells us, *We have a High-Priest which is entered into Heaven, even the Sonne of God* (Therefore saith he) *let us hold fast our profession, &c.* And let us goe boldly to the Throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and find grace to helpe in the time of need, Heb. 4. 14, 16. For Christ is (as one saith) the Priest, the Sacrifice, the God, and the Temple; the Priest by whom, the Sacrifice through whom, the God to whom, and the Temple in whom we are reconciled. Thus for the first branch of the exhortation. The second followeth in adding these words.

Let me heare thy voyce.

שמעני

Let me heare (or, *cause me to heare thy voyce*; to wit, the voyce of his owne spirit speaking in the Spouse, by prayers, praises, and thanksgivings. Christ calleth for the voice of the Spouse, like to the joyous, sweet, mourning note of the Dove in the absence of her Mate.

Hence

Hence Observe,

That Christ is so affected with the sweet Dove-like voyce of his Church, as that he entreats his Church to cause him to heare it. He calls for the voyce of preaching his glorious works, the joy and gladnesse from his Church: and he calls for the voyce of prayer, *Psal. 50. 15. Call on me in the day of trouble, &c.* Though Christ should seeme sometime to neglect his people, as not to heare them: yet he would not have them to cease to call upon him, but would have them pray continually, like the poore Widow in the Gospell that inportuned the Judge: because when he seems not to hear his Spouse, he looks on her with the greatest delectation. So far the second branch of the exhortation. The reason of the one and the other followeth.

For sweet is thy voyce, and thy Countenance is comely.

Thy voyce is sweet) or pleasing, delightfull: that is, acceptable and welcome, being uttered by faith it must needs delight, because it is sweet, melodious, and piercing; and no marvaile, seing it is the voyce of his owne Spirit, and therefore cannot be but very sweet and delightsome.

37
Miscut.
commiscuit,
per meta-
phorum, ju-
cundus dul-
cis.

Hence Observe,

That the voyce of Christs owne spirit in his Saints, is very sweet and pleasant unto him. Would Christ so call and earnestly seeke for the voyce of his Spouse, if it were not a sweet Sacrifice unto him? According as it is written, that the Offerings of Judah and Jerusalem were sweet unto the Lord, *Mal. 3. 4.* And Noah's Sacrifice had a sweet savour unto the Lord. Whereas the Lord saith

Bbb

of

of the wicked, Your Burnt-Offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices sweet unto me, Jer. 6. 20. The second reason followeth.

And thy Countenance is comely.

III.
Cupitur, de-
sideravit,
affluat.

Comely) or *desireable*, *beautiful*: the countenance of the faithfull must needs be glorious: for the wisdom of a man (saith Solomon) doth make his face to shine, and the strength of his face shall be changed, Eccles. 8. 1. This is spoken of heavenly wisdom, which causeth the soules face to shine; causing a right strong heart to change its complexion from evill to good, of deformed, becomming comely. These praises of the Church are spirituall, and according unto the esteeme and high account that God hath of her, and not as shee is esteemed by man. Hence Observe,

That the Spouse is comely and desireable in Christs account. It is most true that Christ himselfe, in respect of worldly reputation, had his visage and forme so marred, that many were astonished at him; he had no forme nor comeliness, Isa. 52. 14. 53. 2. but Christ is highly prized by the Father, and is in high account with the Saints: So the Spouse is black and deformed in respect of her outward forme and visage, as shee appears to the carnall eye, but in Christs esteem shee is faire and beautiful, comely and desireable. Grace in the Saints carries with it the most transcendent good, and the excellency of all beauties, for what is grace but the beaunt of the divine nature, which is the fountain of beauty, and spring of glory? So that all must be faire that comes from the fountain of beauty, and all must be glorious that comes from glory it selfe. It followeth.

VERS.

VER. 15. *Take us the Foxes, the little Foxes that
spoil the Vines: for our Vines have tender
grapes.*

Here the Church repeateth a speech of Christ
which concerneth his care over the faithfull, that
should walke up in a close communion with himsele.
The parts are these two.

First, A commandement for taking and apprehen-
ding the aduersaries, great and small, laid downe un-
der the terme of Foxes, *Take us the Foxes, &c.*

Secondly, A reason thereof, and this is drawne.

First from the nature of the Foxes, which is to de-
vour, *That spoil the Vines &c.*

Secondly, From the time of the Vines weaknesse,
when it is said, *For our Vines have tender grapes, &c.*

Take us the Foxes, &c.

Christs command is to restraine (*the foxes, the little
foxes*) the enemies of the Church, of greater or lesser
power: Hence observe, Christs care over his Church,
he is careful that it be not spoiled by devouring beasts:
he keepes his Vineyard in his owne hand, and will see
that it shall not run to utter ruine.

The Foxes, the little Foxes, &c.

By Foxes, wee may understand, either signes, or
persons, because both of them are hurtfull unto the
Spouse.

First, Every sinne may well be compared to a Foxe.

1. As Foxes hide in the holes of the earth, *Matth. 8. 20.* So are sinnes hidden in the deceitfull heart of man.

2. As the Foxe is both subtile and harmefull, so is sinne.

Secondly, Personall adversaries of the Church may well be compared to foxes, those who labour the ruine of the Church, and these are either false teachers or bloody Tyrants.

First, False Prophets, and false Teachers are so compared by the Prophet, *Ezek. 13. 4.* *O Israel, thy Prophets are like the Foxes in the Desarts.* And such are by Christ likned to *Wolves*, *Matth. 7. 12.* such as these may well be called Foxes.

First, For craft and subiltie; the Apostle tels us, *They transforme themselves into the Apostles of Christ*, *2 Cor. 11. 13.* Such Apostles (saith he) are *deceitfull workers*; that is, who seeme to labour in the Vineyard of Christ, and seeme to be zealous, as if they fought nothing but Gods glorie, when they seek their owne gaine and advantage most of all.

Secondly, In respect of their crooked and perverse wayes; for so a Fox is noted, for his rolling in and out with turnings and windings; and thus *David* speaks of the wicked, and those that are enemies of the Church, *But these* (saith he) *that turne aside by their crooked wayes, lead them forth with the workers of iniquitie*, &c. *Psal. 125. 5.* Such as Apostate from the truth, or, such as are ignorantly zealous, that thinke they doe God good service, to destroy the Saints; Such I say turne aside, and walke in crooked wayes,

wayes, waisting and destroying the Vines of Christ.

Secondly, Bloody and cruell Tyrants are compared to a Foxe, as Christ called *Herod* a Foxe, *Luke 13. 32.* because of his subtiltie, and fraudulent disposition. In like manner the Apostle tels us, that he was *Delivered out of the mouth of the Lion*, *2 Tim. 4. 17.* Some by the Lion understand the Emperour *Nero*, so called for his rage and crueltie; as for the most part, Tyrants and powerfull enemies of the Church are called: As the Mother of the Princes of *Israel* is said to be a *Lionesse*: And she lieth downe among Lyons, and she nourisheth her whelps. (to wit, tyrannicall Kings) among young Lyons, *Ezek. 19. 2.* that is, the mother of the Kings, to wit, the people of the *Jewes*, and *Jerusalem*, which have brought them forth, hath been full of blood and violence, and hath brought forth Kings of the same nature. The powerfull enemies of the Church are often called Lyons, as in *Psal. 35. 17.* and *91. 13* *Pro. 28. Jer. 2. 15.* and *4.* And *Marsyas* certifying his Patron at *Rome*, of the death of *Tiberius*, useth this phrase, the Lion is dead; as *Josephus* reporteth. In *Rev. 19. 20.* wee reade of the Beast and the false Prophet, by which Beast, some understand to be the persecuting magistrate, as the false Prophet to be the persecuting Priest.

Joseph. antiq. lib. 18. cap. 6.

The Pope is a kinde of a mixt Foxe, having power civill and ecclesiastical, usurping both swords, the temporall sword over all Princes, and the spirituall sword over all Churches. Besides all these, wee may come neerer home, and see many of these mysticall foxes, in every Towne and Citty, persecuting the Saints, and spoiling the tender vines of Christ.

Now wee passe to the reasons of this command, and first

first from the devouring nature of these adversaries in the words following.

That spoile our Vines.

Spoile, or, corrupt our Vine-yards, that is, by devouring the grapes: as Foxes spoile and destroy the Vines, so false Prophets, oppressours, and Tyrants destroy the Church: of the first sort the Apostle speakes of, and saith, their word eateth as the Canker, 2 Tim. 24. 17. And of such the Lord complaineth, *Many Pastors, have corrupted my Vineyard,* Jer. 12. 10. In this place Pastors may be applyed unto false Prophets, or unto the tyrannicall Kings and Princes of Babylon.

The last reason is taken from the fruitfulness of the Vine, in these words.

For our Vines have tender grapes.

For, in the Hebrew and, which word is often used instead of *for*, as in Psal. 60. 13. And in Genesis 12. 19.

Our Vines, or, our Vineyards: By the Vinyard and Vine, is understood the Church of Christ, and the Gospel. The Prophet saith, *I will sing to my well beloved, a song of my beloved, of his Vine-yard,* Isa. 5. 1. and *the Vineyard of the Lord is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant,* &c. chap. 5. 7. But now wee must know, that there are two sorts of Vines, the one of Jerusalem, the other of Sodom, as Moses speaketh, *For their Vine is the Vine of Sodom, and of the Vines of Gomorrah, their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters be bitter, their wine is the poyson of Dragons, and the cruell gall of Aspes,* &c. Deut.

Deut. 32. 31. Therefore it must not be the Vine of *Sodome*, but the Vine of *Jerusalem*, which wee are to understand here. This Vine is the Spouse of Christ, and all the faithfull are labourers in the Lords Vineyard.

Tender grapes, which doe but begin to bud, and shew themselves, even in the beginnings of the fruits of religion: Foxes labour to destroy these, as *Herod* sought to destroy Christ at the beginning of his dayes, and *Pharisees* the men Children of *Israel* at their birth, that so *Israel* might be no more a Nation. These Foxes therefore both great and small, must therefore be taken and destroyed. The words being thus unfolded, let us take notice of these observations.

First, Observe.

That the Spouse of Christ is alwayes troubled with some enemies.

There are alwayes those of greater or lesser power to afflict the Church, there will alway be some *Sambalibor* or *Tobiah*, or some such to nibble at the Vines of Christ of this, the Scripture is full of testimonies.

Secondly, Observe.

That these enemies of the Spouse, are of a devouring nature.

That spoile our Vines, &c. Foxes are hurtfull to the labour of the husband-man. *Samson* being wrongd by the *Philistines*, tooke three hundred Foxes, and with their talles set on fire, burnt their corne, with their Vineyards and Olives. There have been alwayes false Teachers, as in *Moses* time, their stood up *Jannes* and *Jambres*; and how many of *Baals* Prophets were there in the time of *Elias*? and when was the Spouse of Christ free from persecution of tyrannicall Kings and Princes?

ces? This is then the Churches portion, and therefore not to be wondred at.

Thirdly, Observe.

That Christ doth cherish the least buddings of grace in his Saints.

For our Vines have tender grapes; When a Vine brings forth wild grapes, Christ will take away the hedge of his vineyard, and it shall be eaten up, Is. 5. 4. But on the contrary, Christ tels us, that every branch that beareth fruit, shall be purged, that it may bring forth more fruit Joh. 15. 1, 2. so that Christ hath great care to preserve young and tender fruit.

Fourthly, Observe.

That such as would by subtiltie and tyrannie destroy the tender plants of Christ are to be restrained. Take the Foxes.

First, for false Prophets, they are to be discovered, and refuted of their error, and after all, judg'd, and cast out of the Church; he that will deny the doctrine of the Gospell, wee must not receive him, neither bid him God-speed, Joh. 2. 10. But in the end, Christ himselfe will restraine both the Beast and the false Prophet, as in Revel. 19. 20. *And the Beast was taken, and with him the false Prophet, that wrought miracles before him, &c. These were both cast alive into a Lake of fire burning with brimstone.* Therefore let all persecuting emperours, Kings, and Priests know, that the time will come that Christ will take them and chaine them up, or else destroy them, and in that he sayes, these shall be taken alive: it notes out unto us, the great and horrible torments, that they shall indure, and that is called the Lake of fire, to wit, an exquisite torment thereby resembled.

VERS. 16, 17.

My beloved is mine, and I am his; he feedeth among the Lilies.

Until the day breake, and the shadows flee away; turne my beloved, and be thou like a Roe, or young heart upon the mountaines of Bether.

THE Church having finished Christs speech, shee now concludeth this divine act with a kinde of triumphant acclamation upon the former passages, for now she begins to feelee some comfort from Christs drawing neer unto her, after her soule-sicknes: Hence she breaketh out.

First, With praise, verse 16.

Secondly, With prayer, verse 17.

First, Wee have the praise of *Messiahs* love, and feeding: his love is laid downe.

First, In the gift of himselfe to his Spouse, expressed in these words, *My beloved is mine, &c.*

Secondly, In that she was made his: *And I am his.* He being hers, she therefore became his.

Lastly, She praiseth his feeding, affirming that to be *among the Lilies.*

In these words, *My Beloved is mine, and I am his:* there is a mutuall intercourse and vicissitude of claiming interest betwixt Christ and his Church; the Church indeed glorieth in this, but not so much in her

Ccc

selfe,

selfe, as in her beloved, according to that of the Apostle, *He that glorieth, let him glorie in the Lord*, 1 Cor. 1. 31. And observe what it is she glorieth in, namely in that communion which is betweene her and Christ, and this she declareth by a passionate expression of comfort, and that from the highest pitch of affection, from a heart enflamed with love, saying, *I am my Beloveds, and my beloved is mine.*

First, Note from these words, *My beloved is mine*, &c. That there is a union betweene Christ and his Saints, from whence ariseth all sweet communion.

Christ is the head of his Spouse, and she by the Spirit united unto him as his mysticall body: he is Christ the giver of all spirituall influence to his Church: Christ is also the Churches, as by marriage, if the person of the Husband be the wives, his goods, and titles of honours are hers also; he having passed over the right of his owne body unto her: so is it in the mysticall marriage betweene Christ and the Spouse, that union and conjunction of persons betweene them, doth intitle the Church in the communion of all his graces.

Now from this union of persons, comes a communion of all good things: so that the Church can say if Christ be mine, all that he hath is mine, what he hath done, and what he hath suffered is mine, and why? because he is mine, for union is the foundation of all blessed communion. And so againe on the other side the Church can say, *I am his*, my person, my life, and strength, and all is his, to glorifie him: so there is a union and communion mutually betweene Christ and his Church. The originall and spring hereof is Christs uniting and communicating himselfe first to his

His Church, for the Spring begins to the streame, what hath the streame, but it first was in the Spring? Now there is an evidence of right and propriety that Christ doth communicate unto his Saints, whereby they have a comfortable interest in him.

First, In all his workes and performances, they are in a peculiar respect for every Saint, his making of the world, setting of policies and governments, rooting up of Kingdomes, executing of judgements in the earth, rewarding some, and punishing others, and the like, all these, and in all other generall providentiall workes of Christ, the Saints have a kinde of interest and proprietie in; next unto his owne glorie, Christ aimed at the good of his Church in all these things, and doth alwayes make them instrumentall for her wellfare, in which sense are the words of the Apostle, 1 Cor. 3. 21, 22. *All things are yours, (saith he) whether Paul or Apollo, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all is yours.*

Secondly, The Saints have a claime also in the dignities and honours of Christ. There is a reciprocation (as it were) betweene him and his people; they are mutually and interchangeably glorified in one another: as Christ is glorified in them, Job. 17. 10. so they are unspeakably dignified, and graced by him. The glorie of Children (saith Solomon) are their Fathers, Prov. 17. 6. If the father be heroicall, or any way excellent, this is the Sonnes glorie, unlesse he degenerate: now the Saints are called the *seed and the Children of Christ*, whatsoever therefore he excels in, it is their dignitie, and their glorie: Besides, Christ doth impart of his glorie and honour to them, making them like himself: Is Christ a sonne, and heire of all? so are thy sonnes,

and heirs, and Co-heirs with Christ; shall he judge the World? So shall they in some sort: Doth he breake in pieces the Nations with a rod of Iron? so doe they: is he ascended into glory? so shall they ascend: there is not any whit of his glory, unlesse it be that which is utterly incommunicable, but they have a touch of it, if I may so say; yea, and that which is incommunicable, redounds to their glory also.

Thirdly, the Saints have interest in the Offices of Christ. Every Saint may say of Christ, he is my Prophet and Teacher, he is my Priest and Reconciler, he is my King and Governour: yea, the Saints have such an interest in these Offices of Christ, that vertue comes out of him to make them even Prophets, and Priests, and Kings also. Prophets in some measure, to teach themselves and others, Priests to offer spirituall Sacrifices, acceptable to God by Christ; and Kings to rule over their owne lusts and corruptions.

Fourthly, the Saints have interest in the graces of Christ: he that hath the field hath also the treasure that is hld in it. It was the greatest consolation and joy of the Spouse that shee could say, *My Beloved is mine*. So all that is in Christ a Believer may appropriate to himselfe; he may say, his riches, his love, his goodnesse, his greatnesse, his power, and all that is his, is mine; I have interest in all those transcendent graces of his, his mercy, his truth, his promises, they are all mine. Thus the Saints have a peculiarity and right in Christ, which is as the Spring of all mutuall love betweene them.

Now to joine the words together (*My Beloved is mine and I am his*) they imply,

1. A mutuall interest; as Psal. 73. *Whom have I in Heaven but thee, and what is there in Earth in comparison of thee?* He is mine, yea, and I am his, there is propriety with peculiarity and interest.

2. The words imply a mutuall love; Christ is the object of the Saints best affections, and the Spouse is the very Center of Christs love, his love rests on the Church, and scatters not to other objects. Thus the Apostle applyes the love of Christ, saying, *He loved me, and gave himselfe for me,* Gal. 2. 20. *And we love him because he loved us first,* 1 John 4. 19. So that the Church may say, Christ is mine, and his love is mine, and I am Christs, he hath my soule, my affections, and all that I have, is his, he hath my love to the uttermost.

3. The words doe also imply mutuall familiarity; Christ is my familiar, my fellow-friend, and Companion; he discovers himselfe unto me in the secrets of his love: So the Saints have a spirit of fellowship and familiarity with God in Christ, so that they can upbosome and let open their hearts to him upon all occasions, as unto a familiar.

4. And lastly, they imploy complacency or resting one in the other. Christ hath a complacency and resting in his Spouse, he is well pleased in her, taking the greatest satisfaction and content in her that possible can be thought on. So the Church hath a complacency or well-pleasednesse in her beloved, whereby shee doth approve and like of all that is in him, resting in his goodnesse, as in the most lovely and desireable object in the World. Hence shee saith in Chap. 1. Verse 1, 2. *Thy love is better then Wine. Because of the savour of thy good Ointments powred forth, therefore doe*
the

the Virgins love thee. This shews what a pleasing and delightfull object Christ is to a believer: what more acceptable to the tast then fragrant wine? Christ is far more acceptable to a Saint. What more pleasing to the smell then sweet Ointments of an exquisite composition? Christ is the same, and far sweeter to the heart of a believer, so that the Saints, from this complacency and wel-pleasednesse in Christ, doe sweetly acquiesce and rest in him, as in the loveliest object in the world.

Having spoken of the union and communion betwixt Christ and his Church, where was set forth the mutuall interest and owning between Christ and the Church. Now it will be necessary that I speake something of the order of this union. Christ is first ours, then we are his, *My beloved is mine, and I am his.*

Hence Note,

That Christ is first ours, and then we are his because he is ours. For this there are foure grounds.

1. Christ is the well-spring of all grace in us, our grace comes from his grace, and our love from his love, as appears, 1 *John* 4. 10. 9.
2. Because the lesse is first beloved of the greater; the nature of love is first to descend, the superiour first loves the inferiour; as the love of a Father descends to his Child first, then the Childs love ascends back to the Father: So Christ first condescends to love us, then we ascend in our love to him againe.
3. From the attractivenesse of Christs love, *Magnus est amor*: love is the attractive loadstone of love; now our nature is such, that we will love onely where we are first loved; as the heat of the Sun-beams reflect from a wall: so Christs love to

us cannot but cause a reflexion of ours upon him; our love is but a sparke of his. *We loved him* (saith the Apostle) *because he loved us first*: when he reveales his love to us such a fire must needs kindle and melt our affections, without which our hearts will be key-cold and frozen.

It must be the same spirit that tells our souls that Christ loves us, that must make us give up our affections to Christ. The spirit of Christ doth sweetly display before the soule, the rich, free, and liberal love of Christ, and also with the discovery of his love, causes the soul to love him againe.

The next thing to be enquired into, is,

1. How Christ comes to be ours.

2. How we come to be Christ's.

Christ becomes ours by such means as these.

1. Christ is ours by the free donation and gift of the Father, as appears, *Jch. 3. 16. God so loved the World that he gave his onely begotten Sonne, &c.*

2. Christ freely gave himselfe unto us; so that Christ is ours by his owne consent, he hath, as it were passed over himselfe unto us. The Apostle saith, *Christ loved me and gave himselfe for me*, Gal. 2. 20. As the Father freely gave his Sonne unto us, so Christ freely and spontaneously gave his consent to be ours.

3. Christ hath passed himselfe over unto his Church by Marriage; although we had nothing to bring to him but poverty and misery, yet he tooke upon him our nature to discharge all, that he might marry us, and so passe over himselfe unto us, as a husband passeth over himselfe unto his wife. Hence it is that the Lord saith, *I am married unto you, and I will take you one of a City, and two of a Family, and I will bring you*

you to Zion; Jeremiah, Chap. 3. Verse 14.

4. And lastly, Christ is ours by communicating of his owne Spirit to us: for the Spirit is given forth at end, to shew us all things that are given us of God, whereof Christ is the chiefe: this is that the Apostle tells us, when he saith, *No man knoweth the things of God, but the Spirit of God. Now (saith he) we have not the Spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given us of God; and thus we have the mind of Christ,* 1 Corinth. 2. 11. 12. 16.

Having declared how Christ is ours, and that he is ours in the first place, before we can be his. It followeth that we speak of the reflexion on the other hand, and shew how we become Christs.

The Saints are Christs these fowre wayes.

1. Christ hath propriety in us by the donation of the Father. *God hath made him both Lord and Christ,* Act. 2. 36. *And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the Church,* Ephes. 1. 22. And now saith Christ, behold, I and the Children whom thou hast given me, Heb. 2. Thine they were, and thou gavest them to me, John 17. 6. For as in respect of Gods justice we were bought by Christ in our redemption; so in regard of his love we were given unto Christ in our Election, that he might Redeeme us.

2. We are Christs by Choyse: *I have chosen you out of the World,* saith Christ, John 15. 19. And the Saints are said to be *chosen in Christ,* Ephes. 1. 4. And they are called *chosen, and faithfull,* Revel. 17. 14.

3. The Saints are Christs by Purchase: we were in the hand of our Enemies, and could not free our selves

He hath redeemed us from under the Law, therefore Christ redeemed us from under the Law, Gal. 3. 13. And the Apostle saith, *we were bought with a price*, 1 Cor. 6. 20. He was our Surety, and stood in our stead, and was set forth to declare the righteousness of God, Rom. 3. 26. *For then, we are Christs by right of redemption.*

And lastly, *We are Christs by combination and Covenant*, I entered into Covenant with thee, and thou becomest mine, Ezek. 16. 8. That is, I did make a solemn Covenant or stipulation with thee, that I would take thee to be my people.

Thus much for the mutuall union and communion, and for that mutuall interest and propriety betwene Christ and his Church. Now it followeth, that the Church commendeth Christs feeding.

He feedeth among the Lilies.

After the Church had extolled Christ for his love, she praises his feeding, affirming that to be *among Lilies*. These words are diversly Interpreted, because the Hebrew word may be taken either actively, or passively. If it be taken passively, it may be meant of Christs feeding himselfe. Or, we may take it actively of Christs feeding, *viz.* his Flock, among Lilies. Or we may take it for Christs feeding of himselfe and his Church: he feeds his Church among Lilies, and delights himselfe to be there, the one follows the other. But especially it is meant of the Church, whose that are his Saints, he feeds them *among the Lilies*.

Lilies are such kind of flowers as require a great deal of nourishment, and they flourish and prosper

best in Valleys and low ground, where the soile is most fat, and therefore when she saith, *He feeds among Lilies*, the meaning is, he feeds his Church and people in sweet, pleasant, soft, and well-smelling pasture, he plentifully and pleasantly intreateth those that are his; for Lilies we know are faire, sweet, soft, and pleasant, and therefore the Church saith, that her beloved feedeth his flock among the Lilies, which is to let us understand that he feedeth her with most excellent things. And it is most sure, that there is nothing under Heaven that can be esteemed as a full shadow and resemblance of the Heavenly Manna, wherewith Christ feedeth the souls of his.

Hence Observe,

That Christ feeds his Church and people fully, sweetly, and comfortably. He feeds among Lilies. Agreeable to this is that in Psal. 23. 1, 2. *Sic. The Lord is my Shepherd.* (saith David) *or my feeder, my Pastor,* and what is the use he maketh of it? *I shall not want.* How is this made good? why saith he, *He maketh me to lye downe in green pastures, or in the ludding grasse.* That is, in pleasant pastures where Greene and tender Herbes doe spring, he makes me to lye downe and refresh my self. And he addeth, *He leadeth me beside the still waters,* or *he gently leadeth me unto the waters of rest.* That is, he doth comfortably guide me, with sustaining my infirmity, he nourisheth me by the refreshing waters of his Spirit.

The like place we have, Isa. 40. 11. *He shall feed his flock like a Shepherd, he shall gather the Lambs with his Armes, and carry them in his bosome, and shall gently lead those that are with young.* So Christ leads his people, as it were among Lilies, and feeds them plentifully, with

with ſweet and pleaſant things: and in his boſome he carries them, ſoftly, and tenderly, that ſuch as are weak may not be wronged.

Another place ſuitable to this purpoſe is Ezek. 34.

I will feed them in good paſtures, upon the high mountain of Iſrael, there ſhall their fold be, there ſhall they lye in a good fold, in a fat paſture will I feed my ſtcke, and cauſe them to lye downe, ſaith the Lord God. I will ſeeke that which is loſt, and bring back that which is driven away. I will bind up that which is broken, and ſtrengthen that which is ſicke, and deſtroy the fat and the ſtrong, and feed them with judgement. Thus the Lord doth plentifully, comfortably, and ſweetly feed his people, as among Lillies. Thus he feedeth us, and with us, he feedeth us as a Father, but feedeth with us as a brother alſo: yea, as an husband and amiable lover. Now followeth the Churches prayer.

Verſ. 17. *Untill the day breake, and the ſhadow ſlee away: Returne my Beloved, and be thou like a Roe or young Hart upon the Mountaines of Beth.*

In theſe words we have the Churches Prayer, which is ſet forth by the matter, that Chriſt would returne often and viſit and comfort his Church, *Turne my beloved, &c.*

This is declared firſt by the time, *Untill the day breake, and the ſhadow ſlee away.* Secondly, by the ſwifneſſe of his coming, *And be thou like a Roe or young Hart upon the Mountaines of Beth.*

Turne my Beloved &c.

סבב
Circumfuit.

Turne, or, turne about, to wit, to comfort and succour me. It is a request of comfort from Christ, as in Psal. 71. 21. David saith, *Thou didst much increase my greatnesse, and didst turne about, and comfort mee, in the night and shadows of darknesse and ignorance.*

Hence Observe, *That the Church desireth comfort and succour from Christ in the times of darknesse and affliction.*

The day is a time of knowledge, peace, and comfort, the dawning of the day, is the sense and feeling of this comfort, by the inward working of the Spirit, as the Apostle exhorteth us, to take heed to the sword word of prophesie, as unto light that shineth into a darke place, *Untill the day dawne, and the day-star arise in our heart,* 2 Pet. 1. 19. that is, untill a spirituall discoverie of Christ be made in the soule, which is as the rising of the morning starre.

Now this desire of the Churches is declared first, in respect of the time.

פחד
Flavit, spiritus,
suspiravit.

Untill the day breake, and the shadows flee away.
Untill the day dawne, or, untill the day blow, or breath forth, to wit, light, as appears by the fleeing of the shadows, which use to be dispelled by the morning wind; as on the contrary, when the day goeth away, the shadows of the evening are said to be stretched forth, Jer. 6. 4.

Now for the day, and departing of the shadows, we may understand it, of the time of the Law preceding Christ.

Christs incarnation, which Law was nothing else but a shadow of good things to come: Or, we may understand it of the cloudy darke time in this world, and after Christs appearing in the flesh, I shall speake a word to both these.

As Christ was the Sonne comming forth gloriously as a Bridegroom: So the Law was a shadow of good things to come, the bodie whereof was Christ, *Heb. 10. Col. 2. 17.* wherein the Apostle may well allude to the shadow (accompanying a mans bodie) which sometimes is before, sometimes behind, as occasion is ministered by the Suns course: even as shadows went before Christs comming in the flesh, some other followed after. And as the Apostle calleth all a shadow: so *John* here useth the plurall, shadows, as comprehending all types and shadows.

Now for divine shadows, they may be considered as personall, or as sacramentall.

First, For personall shadows: *Adam* was the first, called the first man, being a shadow of Christ, called the second man, or *Adam*, *1 Cor. 15. 45.* *Adam* was first in execution, but Christ first in intention: the first was but a type of the second. The Second *Enoch*, whose name (in English, taught or dedicated) holds forth Christ, taught of the Father, and dedicated to his fathers will; and he increased in wisdom and stature, whereby he was one with *Enoch*. *Melchisedech* was another eminent type of *Messiah*, who was first King of righteousness, and King of peace, shadowing forth him, who was the fountaine of all justice and righteousness, and the Prince of peace, *Isa. 9. 6.* *Aaron*, whose name signifieth a high mountaine: shadowed for Christ, who is set on the top of mountains and exalted above

above the ark, Isa. 2. 2. Thus I might shew how *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Samson,* with many other Prophets, Priests, Kings, and other of the men of God, they were all but types and shadows of the *Messiah*.

And as for sacramentall shadows : as the sacrifices shadowed forth Christs mediation for his people. Circumcision was a type of the blood of Christ, without which blood is no remission, Heb. 9. 22. The striking of the blood of the Lamb on the Posts of the doors, where the Israelites dwelt was a token and assurance to them, that the destroying Angel should passe over them, and smite only the first borne of the *Egyptians* : now what else did that blood prefigure, but the blood of Christ, wherewith the Saints being sprinkled, the destroyer cannot hurt them. The Pillar of the cloud by day, and of fire by night was the type of Christ, leading and guiding his people continually. The water of the Rock, and the *Manna* in the Wilderness were signs, that Christ should spiritually feed and refresh his people. The Serpent of brasse lifted up by *Moses*, signified that he should be their Physician and healer. In a word, all the sacrifices under the Law did typifie, that Christ should make attonement for believers.

Now all these were darke, sacramentall resemblances, wherein God did appeare unto his people of old, therefore they desired the neereſt approach of his unto them, untill these ceremoniall shadows should vanish away.

Now concerning the new Testaments shadow, they are baptism, and breaking of bread : and unto these two it was that the Ancients had respect, when as they said, the side of Christ was pierced, that for the
doore

house of life there might be set open, from whence the Churches sacraments have issued; understanding by water, baptism; and by blood, the Lords supper. Now for these, they are but outward resemblances, which lead unto Christ; so that when Christ which is our light shall appear in the glorious discoveries of his life, and as it were swallow up his people in spiritual glorie, then these shadows must also vanish away, because when the truth it self appeareth, the figure and outward resemblance must cease: even as an emperours image hath authoritie in his absence, but being present, the Image hath no such power: therefore wee are to make use of the shadows, so farre as Christ is absent from us: and againe, so farre as we have the substance, wee need not catch after outward representations and shadows. Thus much for the coming of Christ, declared by the time: *Untill the daybreake, and shadows flee away, &c.*

Now followeth in the second place the manner of his coming, by his swiftnes.

And be thou like a young Roe, or a young Hart upon the mountains of Bether.

There are two things observable.

First, The Creature whereto he is resembled, namely, a Roe, or young Hart.

Secondly, The place of his abode, that is, the mountains of Bether.

Of the Roe, and *Hinda*, wee have spoken of before in verse 9. But concerning the mountains of Bether something is to be spoken.

Bether is here taken by some for the proper name of a place.

a place so called: of which I shall use appellation, and so it signifies the mountains of division. If we take it for a place, it is called *Bilbron*, which was on the outside of *Jordan*, 2 Sam. 2. 29. called partition, because it parted by the River *Jordan*, from the Land of *Judea*. And on those mountains, *Harts* and *Roe* used to run, as appears by the Scripture. Now we must understand by these mountaines, mystically to be the partition wall, which divided betwene *Jew* and *Gentile*, untill the coming of *Christ*, who then of two were made one. Or else wee may understand the mountaines of division, by that sin, or ignorance whereby wee are hindred from the full fruition of *Jesus Christ*, for not only the Churches sacramentall shadowes shall vanish, but also the night of sinne, the worker of darkenesse, the scale of ignorance, and blindness, and the shadow of death, shall flee away.

From this verse thus opened observe.

That the Saints here are overwhelmed with many mist and shadows, much ignorance of *God*, and the like.

*Christ*s discoverie to the people of the *Jewes*, was but under veiles, and types, the light was an obscure and glimmering lights to our; now *Christ* hath flowed in upon his people in greater abundance of revelation then before his coming in the flesh; yet our light is that we see now, but *ignorance is still yet, through the darkness*, for what wee shall doe hereafter.

Secondly Observe.

That it is the desire of the Saints to have close communion with *Christ*, while they are under shadow.

Hence it was, that the Church desired *Christ* to draw neer unto her, and to come swiftly whilst she was under the ceremoniall shadowes; and that he would be

with

with her, untill they did vanish away : even so the Church now desireth, while she is in the wilderness, that he would come swiftly unto her, to comfort her in all her blindnesse and tribulation.

Thirdly, and lastly, Observe.

That the glorious morning of Christs comming to his people, will expell the darknesse of the night of sinne, and ignorance.

This the Apostle testifieth, when he saith, *But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away,* 1 Cor. 13. 10. When the substance is come, there is no need of the shadow, and therefore so farre as the Lord shall discover himselfe unto us in spirit ; outward resemblances shall vanish away. So endeth the second Chapter.

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CANT.

withed, until they did vanish away: even so the
Church now desireth while she is in the wilderness, that
her Lord should come, with his arms, to comfort her in all
her blindness and tribulation.

Thirdly, and lastly, Observe.

That the glorious coming of Christ, coming to his peo-
ple, will expell the darkness of the night of sin, and igno-

rance. This the Apostles teach, when he saith, Remem-
ber that which is past, is come, then that which is to come shall
be done away, 1 Cor. 13. 10. When the substance is
come, there is no need of the shadow, and therefore
forasmuch as the Lord shall discover himself unto us in
glorie; our inward resemblances shall vanish away. So
endeth the second Chapter.

CANT.

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best communion between them they fell into

to make some remembrance of his love and this he doth

by looking with desire of his love and this he doth

in his heart about his love and this he doth

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CANTICLES

Chap. III.

V E R S E S. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

I sought on my bed, I sought him whom my soule loveth,
I sought him, but I found him not.

I will rise now and goe about the Citie in the streets, and in
the broad wayes, I will seeke him whom my soule loveth,

I sought him, but I found him not.
The watchmen that goe about the Citie, found me: to whom

I said, saw ye him whom my soule loveth,
It was but a little that I passed from them; but I found him

whom my soule loveth, I held him, and would not let him
goe, untill I brought him into my mothers chamber, and into

the Chamber of her that conceiveth me.
I charge you, O ye Daughters of Jerusalem, by the Roes, and by

the Hindes of the Field, that ye stirre not up, nor awake my
love, till he be please.

In the first Chapter of this Song, we heard the
servent suit of the Church, for obtaining the

presence of her beloved, whereunto she re-
ceived a comfortable answer. And after there was a

neerer communion betweene them, they fell into mutuall praises one of another.

In the second Chapter, Christ provoketh his Church to make some returnes of his love, and this he doth, by speaking excellent things of himselfe, and also commending his Spouse. Whereupon the Spouse is drawn forth to speake excellent things of her beloved. Afterwards, Christ in a most kinde manner sought and called her up againe, and againe, to arise, and come forth unto him, to the end he might have communion with him, untill all shadows were vanished away.

Now in this Chapter the Church declareth, how she sought after her beloved, and how studious she was to find him, being absent; as also for retaining of Christ being found; But after she had found her beloved, and was fully assured of his excellency and glorie, she declareth that it is much better and profitable for her, not to stay her Spouse here, but to ascend with him into his heavenly bride-chamber.

This Chapter may be divided into two parts.

In the first, the Church setteth forth the fervent desire she hath to take hold of Christ, and to possesse him, which appeareth in this, that she seekes him by day, and by night, at home, and abroad, in the fields, and in the City, she being wonderfully inflamed with his love, and this reacheth from verse 1. to the end of the 5.

In the second part, she doth as it were correct herself, desiring rather that he should take hold of her, and that she might abide with him, whereupon she entereth into a commendation of his glorie, sweetness, &c. And not only comparing it with *Solomons*, but preferring it before it, and that by many degrees, and this reacheth

from

from Verſe 6. unto the end of the Chapter.

Fiſt, the Churches ſearch after Jeſus is couched in the fiſt three verſes. And in the fiſt of theſe three is laid downe her fiſt ſearch, together with the event.

This ſearch is declared from the circumſtances, which be two.

1. Of the time, and that was in the Night.

2. Of the place, and that was in her Bed.

Laſtly, touching the effect of this ſearch of hers; it is not availing, for ſhe found him not.

By night on my Bed I ſought him, &c.

The night is a time of ſolitary & earneſt meditation,

as in *Iſa. 26. 9* With my ſoul have I deſired thee in the night; with my ſpirit within me, will I ſeek thee early. And ſometimes grievous afflictions are ſignified by the night, as appears, *Pſal. 17. 3. & 30. 5. 77. 2.*

By the Bed ſome underſtand the Bed of eaſe and ſleep, and that the Church was now under deadneſſe and ſecurity, thinking that Chriſt had been preſent with her, when it was no ſuch matter. But this is not likely to be the meaning of the Bed, for what eaſe could the Church take in the abſence of Chriſt.

The Bed ſometimes ſignifies tribulation, as in *Rev. 2. 22.* which may be implied here, that the Church ſought and waited for the Lord in the way of his judgements, as in *Iſa. 26. 8.* Tea, in the way of thy judgements, O Lord have we waited for thee, the deſire of our ſoules is in thy name, and to the remembrance of thee.

Or, we may take the Bed here for the place and duties of Gods worſhip, the Temple and the Ordinance, as in *Chap. 4. 16.* where it is ſaid, Our Bed is green,

mean-

meaning the place and means of bringing forth converts unto Christ.

I sought him whom my soule loveth.

קָסַף
Quasiuit,
requisivit,
postulavit,
petiit, stu-
duit, con-
tus est.

The Hebrew word Translated *Sought*, signifies to seeke by suing and praying, by asking direction and counsell, and by making a strict inquiry after the thing seeked for. So that the Church sought by much prayer, study, and meditation; shee made a diligent search after her beloved.

Whom my soule loveth, towit Christ whom shee called her beloved, Chap. 1. 7. The Church using this *Periphrasis*, instead of a proper name, doth nothing else but expresse the force of her love, and the earnestness thereof. It was the strong affection of love, that set the Church on seeking Christ; shee could not endure his absence, nor sit downe contented without him. Thus the Church sought Christ in his absence; her successe followeth, which for the present is *not* *finding*, for shee saith,

But I found him not.

I found him not, towit, presently, or I did not sufficiently perceive him, to be present with me, according to my hearts desire: I find not such sweet discoveries of his love, nor such glorious apprehensions of him, as my soul desireth. This was the Churches successe for the present. The verse being thus opened, let us take notice of some Observations from It.

First Observe,

That Christ may sometimes be absent from his dearest Saints.

This is implied by the Churches seeking Christ, for inquisition implies absence. Christ may, and doth many times vaile himselfe for a time, and withdraw his light and comfort from the soule: but we must know also, that he takes not away his love, but onely suspends the acts of it: he doth but seeme to frowne when he doth abscond, and ecclipse himselfe from the soule, so that the soule looserh the sence of his love and favour, so that Christ seemeth to be altogether absent, or at a great distance from the soul.

Secondly Observe,

That when Christ is absent from the Saints, they are in great iniquitie of minde, for want of the feeling of his presence. Hence the Church saith, shee sought Christ upon the bed of tribulation and sorrow, in the night of darkness and affliction: for when Christ is gone from a Believer in his apprehension, then the comfort and assurance of his love is gone, joy and light is gone. O how dejected, how disconsolate is the soul then! So far as a man is spirituall, the flame of love to Christ is kindled in him, and then he cannot sit down without him. He is the Fountaine of all supply, he is the staffe of strength, the support of joy, and the verie will of the soule: O that I might see him (saith the Christian): O that I might live in his presence! Nothing in the world will content him, neither honour, riches, nor pleasures, nor friends, nor any thing else will content him, till he find the Lord Jesus Christ his Beloved, whom formerly with unspeakable pleasure he enjoyed.

Thirdly Observe,

That the Church makes earnest inquisition and dilligent search after Christ when he is absent. I sought him, &c.

Shee

Shee seeks Christ with meditation, study, and strong endeavours, shee seeks him diligently, as appears in the Verses following, shee never gives off untill shee finds her beloved. All the Ordinances wherein shee seeks Christ are (as I may say) a walke wherein he meets his people: therefore the Saints put themselves upon that way, but if they find not Christ present, their spirits faile, but when Christ is to be found by them, it is as life from the dead.

Fourthly Observe,

That the principle from which a believer seeks Christ, is love. I sought him whom my soule loveth. The love of Christ cannot be concealed: a man may sooner keep in the wind with his fist, or stay the Ointment of his right hand from betraying it selfe (as the Wiseman speaks, Prov. 27. 16.) then not utter his love to Christ. Love is such a fire as will break forth, it is the strongest affection of the soule, and cannot be satisfied without the enjoyment of the thing beloved.

Lastly Observe,

That Christ is not always to be found in our sense and feeling, though we use all good means to attaine it. This is from the Churches successe in that shee saith, *I found him not.* Christ is not alwayes found on the suddain, he may a good while suspend the acts of his love from a soule, to the end he may make it earnest in seeking after him, and with endurance wait for his returne, and this effect we see in the following words, where in shee persists in her Narration, thus.

Verf. 2. *I will rise now, and goe about the City, in the streets and in the broad wayes I will seeke him whom my soule loveth: I sought him, but I found him not.*

In this Verse we have the Church stirred up to make a farther search after her beloved. And herein observe.

First, her resolution to make farther inquiry after Christ. *I will rise now, &c.* This resolution was enforced from her not availing in her former search.

Secondly, her action of so seeking, and that is, shee goes,

1. *Into the City.*

2. *Into the Streets, and broad places.*

Lastly, we have the effect of her further search, it is as the former, nothing at all availing, for, saith shee, *I sought him, but I found him not.*

I will arise now, &c.

In the words the Church declareth her increase of grace, of faith, love, zeale, and fervency of spirit, as if shee had said, I will not delay my searching after my beloved no longer (for all these are the words of the Spouse speaking unto her self, & as it were, declaring the consultations which shee had within her selfe, and resolving what shee were best to doe) therefore now saith shee, I am resolved diligently to seeke him: now I will leave my former seeking in bed, and I will seeke him in the City, &c. Thus we have the Churches resolution. Now followeth her action in seeking.

Fff

And

And goe about the City, in the streets and broad places. &c.

I will goe about the City, towit, to seeke my beloved for I will leave no place unsought, as if shee had said, which shewed her earnest desire to obtain that which shee look't for. By the City we may understand *Jerusalem* the holy City, where the Temple was seated, and the practise of all the Ordinances, whither all *Israel* repaired thrice every yeare, which was a figure of the Church, as appears, *Isa. 26. 1. In that day shall be singing in the Land of Judah, we have a strong City, &c.* This is spoken of the Church under the Gospell, for whom the Lord would appoint *salvation for walls and bulwarks*. So that the Church sought her beloved among the people of God, and among his Ordinances and word, that by this meanes her soule might find comfort in him.

In the streets and broad places, or, narrow streets, and broad streets, for both words are used for the streets of a City: and the latter for such broad places, as oftentimes people meet together in, as in *Nehem. 8. 1.* So that this noteth an exquisite and narrow search, as in another case it is said, *Run yee too and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seeke in the broad places thereof, if yee can finde a man, if there be any that executeth judgement, &c. Jer. 5. 1.* And wisdom uttereth her voyce in the streets, *Prov. 1. 20.* Now the Church is said to seeke her Beloved in the streets, because shee will leave no place unsought, untill shee have found her beloved.

I sought

I sought him, but I found him not.

Look how shee resolved, so shee acted; yet notwithstanding her successe was fruitlesse as before, *I found him not.* The Spouse uttereth these words mournfully, not so much for the pains shee took, as that shee could not meet with him whom shee so tenderly lov'd, and carefully sought. And when shee saith, *shee found him not*; shee meaneth, not so sufficiently as shee would, and as her heart desired, as may appeare by the former Verse.

Hence Observe,

That no repulse or impediment can hinder the Saints from seeking after Christ. Here the Spouse not finding Christ at one place seeks him in another; and if shee find him not at one time, shee seeks at another: shee sought him on her Bed, and he was not found there; then shee renews her resolution, saying, *I will rise now, and goe into the City, &c.* Like the woman in the Gospell, that would take no deniall; and Jacob, who would not let the Lord goe, untill he had got the blessing. The Israelites in the Wildernesse thirsted for water, as the Spouse here desireth the company of her beloved: when Moses had cryed to the Lord, he answered, *Goe before the people, and take with thee the Elders of Israel, and thy Rod, wherewith thou smotest the River, take in thy hand and goe.* Behold, *I will stand before thee upon the Rock in Horeb, and thou shalt smite on the Rock, and water shall come out of it, that the people may drinke.* And Moses did so in the sight of all the Elders of Israel. There at the first smiting of the Rock water issued out. But here the Spouse seeketh Christ, and

findeth him not : what is then to be done? In another place *Moses* strooke the Rock, and at the first time no water came out, *Numb.* 20. 11. yet he did not so desist, but smote the Rock the second time, and the waters gushed out abundantly. So the Spouse not finding Christ upon her first seeking of him, she seeketh him the second time, and yet findeth him not : she asketh for him in the Citie, among her friends and acquaintance, which have been assaulted by the like temptations, they give her no comfort : yet for all that, the Spouse doth not give over, but sought him the third time as followeth.

VER. S. 3. *The watchmen that goe about the Citie, gaubed to see if they found me : to whom I said, saw ye him whom my soule loveth?*

As before wee heard of the Spouses seeking Christ in the Citie, among her friends and companions : so in this verse, wee are to note her proceedings with the Governours of the Citie. Where note :

First, A description of these Governours.

Secondly, Her way of proceedings with them.

The Governours are described,

First by a title appropriate to their dutie, and that is, *Watchmen.*

Secondly, By their exercise and worke they did.

First, They *circuited the Citie.*

Secondly, They *found her* as unawares.

Lastly, Wee have the way of the Churches proceedings with them, and that lies only in a question, in these words, *saw ye him whom my soule loveth.*

The Watchmen that goe about the City, &c.

By watch-men are often meant, the Ministers of the Church : Such were the Priests and Levites under the Law, who kept the watch or charge of the Lord, Numb. 3. 7, 8. and so it is said in Isa. 62. 6. *I have set Watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night, &c.* And the Lord said to the Prophet Ezekiel, *Sonne of man, I have made thee a watch-man over the house of Israel, Ezek. 3. 17.* And the Apostle saith, *Obey them which have the oversight of you, and submit your selves to them, for they watch over your soules, Heb. 13. 14.* and in Isa. 52. 8. it is said, *Thy watch-men shall lift up the voice, &c.*

These watchmen were imployed, and in action, because they were such as went too and fro the Citie : so that whosoever these watchmen were, it seemes they were vigilant and painfull in their generation, in so much that the Church saith, these watchmen found her.

Found me, &c.

It is not said that the Church made any inquirie after these watch men ; but that they found her : which thing doth the rather argue diligence on their part, then on the Churches. Now the Watchmen having found her, let us see what use she makes of them : she only proposes a question.

Saw ye him whom my soule loveth.

Here she Inquires of them for her beloved; but here is no mention of any answer or resolution they give unto her concerning Christ; and its probable by the next verse, that they gave her no answer to her demand. The Church makes tryall of their knowledge, if happily they could relieve her ignorance: but it seemes these were blind watchmen, and enemies to divine revelation: of which the Prophet speakes, and saith, they are *blind watchmen, and dumb dogs*, Isa. 56. 10. It falleth out often, that the Pastors are ignorant, and not such as wee may relie on for instruction and comfort, as where it is said, *Night shall be to them for vision, darknesse for a divination, the Sunne shall goe downe over the Prophets, the day shall be dark over them*, Mich. 3. 6. This is the third time of the Churches enquire after Christ.

Hence Observe,

That the Saints seeke Christ diligently, and constantly.

The Spouse sought Christ so diligently, as that she left no meanes unattempted to gaine communion with him: she seekes him in every Ordinance, and way where he useth to be found; neither will she give over her search, and enquire, untill she hath found him. The Church also sought Christ constantly, she sought him without intermission or ceasing. First, she sought him in her *bed by night*, and there she had no good successe: Then she sought him in the *streets and broad places of the Citie*. and yet she found him not; neither is shee contented, but she seekes him againe, shee askes the *Watchmen* for him; such as intended to be in superintendencie,

tendencie and ministrie : such as pretend to have the greatest care over her; but even they satisfie her not : therefore she goes further, waiting patiently for the revelation of Christ : and so at length hath blessed successe, which was, as followeth.

VERS. 4. *It was but a little, that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soule loveth: I held him, and would not let him goe, untill I had brought him into my mothers house, and into the Chamber of her that conceived me.*

In this verse is contained the happy successe of the Churches search after Christ, and this is manifested.

First, In that she findes her beloved.

Secondly, In that she doth retaine him.

The Church declareth not what comfort or counsell she had at the watchmens hands, which perhaps was little or nothing at all, such blinde watchmen there are many times; but she proceedeth to declare what issue her diligent search had, namely, that she was scarce gone from them, but shee found her beloved; as in the following words.

It was but a little that I passed from them.

of little, or a very little : The Hebrew word signifies either a little while, as in Psal. 37. 10. *Yet a little while and the wicked shal not be:* this is meant of a little time, or the word is used for a little deale, as in Psal. 37. 16.

A little that the righteous man hath, is better then the riches of many wicked: that is, in respect of quantitie, but in Psal. 8. 6. it signifieth a little, or ashort time. It matters not much, whether wee take it for time, or distance of place.

I passed from them, to wit, from those watchmen, spoken of in the former verse; she stayed nor with them, because her beloved was not among them, but continued seeking other where: for it is neither the societie of Brethren, or Church, or Ministers, can comfort an afflicted conscience, unlesse Christ be there displaying the beames of his love and favour to the soule.

But I found him whom my soule loveth.

I found, or Untill I had found him. Here after much seeking and waiting, the Church finds her Beloved: it is not lost labour to seeke and wait for Christ constantly and perseveringly: such labour in the Lord shall never be in vaine; for at the end of their seeking they shall have blessed successe.

Hence note.

First, That Christ giveth in comforts to his people, when in mans judgement all helps are past.

When the Church had sought Christ in all the meanes before spoken, as on her bed, in the Citie, and streets, and last of all enquires of the watchmen of the Citie, but in all this seeking finds not her beloved: but now a little after, when shee had left all outward meanes, and only waited for her Beloved, then Christ makes out to her the sweet manifestations of his grace and love; it is Christs usuall course, to let all outward
and

and humane helps faile, before he giveth comfort : as he ſuffered his Diſciples on the Seas to be almoſt drowned, before he would help them, *Matth. 14. 26.* Chriſt doth alſo many times worke without meanes, that the praiſe might not be aſcribed to men, but to himſelfe : *As he gave Abraham a Child when he was old, and it ceaſed to be with Sarah, after the manner of women, Gen. 18. 12.* So the Lord brought his people out of *Babylon*, when they were in mans judgement as farre from returning home againe, as the dead which were buried in their graves, yet then the Lord commanded *Ezekiel* to Propheticke to the dead bones, ſhewing thereby, that the people ſhould riſe out of the grave of captivitie in *Babylon*, and returne againe unto *Jeruſalem*, *Ezek. 37.* And thus Chriſt did, when he was to raiſe *Lazarus*, he lets him lie in the grave ſoure dayes, and then raiſes him to life, *Joh. 11. 39.* And thus *Peters* deliverance was deferred to the laſt night, before the Lord ſent an Angel to ſet him at liberty, *Act. 12.* Thus Chriſt doth deſerue his comforts to the laſt, but he comes in due time to thoſe that waite on him.

Secondly Obſerve.

That thoſe that ſeeke and wait for Chriſt constantly and
perſeveringly ſhall at laſt find Chriſt.

The Church had ſought Chriſt with much diligence, and waited for him with much patience, and at length ſhe hath bleſſed ſucceſſe, and ſaith, *I found him whom my ſoule loveth.* A Father hath this ſaying, if not to day, yet to morrow ; if not to morrow, yet the next day after it : as he which having fiſhed all the day caught nothing, and at night did thinke to give over, yet caſt his net againe, and caught the fiſh. We ſhould not faint in ſpiritual things, for the promiſe is, *Seeke*

Si non hodie, cras, ſi non cras, perendino die, ut qui piſcatus die manihil cepit, ſub noctem abiit re putans capto qui ipſum toto die ſeſelli, piſce diſcedit.

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and yee shall smile, *Matth. 7. 7.* And wee shall reape if wee faint not. And the Apostle tels us, *Wee have need of patience, that after wee have done the will of God, we might receive the promise, Heb. 10. 36.*

But now the question may be, whether ever Christ be absent from his Spouse?

The answer is, no; but only in the manifestations of grace, and in discoveries of himselfe: but he is really in the soule of a believer still, and so he was now present with the Spouse, even then when she sought after him. What is that stirred her up to seeke Christ so diligently? and what was it that kindled her affections towards him, as to call him her beloved? surely it was Christ by his Spirit acting in her, and quickning up her affections: Christ had not so withdrawne, but he left the droppings of divine grace behinde him, he withdrew himselfe in manifestation only, not in the realitie of workings of his Spirit: her heart was never so dead, but she could seeke after her beloved, yea and wait upon him, untill she had fresh discoveries of his love manifested unto her.

So much for the Churches successe.

Now follows her prudentiaall care in keeping of Christ when found.

I held him, and would not let him goe, untill I had brought him into my Mothers house, and into the Chamber of her that conceived me.

In which retentation wee may take notice of.

First, The Churches apprehending Christ.

Secondly, Her drawing him into her Mothers house or mansion.

I held him, and would not let him goe, &c.

I held him, towit, firmly and closely: the Hebrew word signifies to joyne or fasten together, or to unite by cleaving together, or a knitting together, as two peeces of Timber are knit together by a joynt. And indeed the matter here urged can signifie no lesse then a close cleaving of the Spouse unto her beloved.

Hence Observe,

That it is the nature of faith to take fast hold of Christ. It was by faith (questionlesse) that the Spouse did thus apprehend Christ, and with such an apprehension as implies a union; yea, and such a union as is, in the naturall body, as the Apostle sheweth, Ephes. 5. 30. so that thereby the faithfull become members of his body mysticall. As a Father saith, as a man and a woman are one by nature, so Christ and his Church must be understood to be one through faith. Now Christ is said to dwell in the heart by faith, Ephes. 3. 17. Now the Spouse doth as well retaine Christ, as take hold of him.

וְנִקְחָהּ
Cepit, ap-
prehendit.
hæsit, coha-
esit, adunxit.
in niph. cap-
tus, deen-
tus fuit.

Sicut vir
& Mulier
unum sunt
per naturam,
ita Christus
& ecclesia
unum in-
ligantur, ef-
se fidem,

I would not let him goe, or leave him.

Herein the Church declares her resolution to retain her beloved, as Jacob when he wrestled with the Angel, Genes. 32. 26. *I will not let thee goe except thou blesse me.* The Spouse having now obtained her beloved, was loath to part with him againe, upon any termes whatsoever.

Hence Observe,

That the soule that hath once got Christ, will surely keepe

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Christ

Christ. The Spouse was not onely diligent in seeking her beloved, but shee had also a prudentiall care to keep Christ when found. *I would not let him go,* saith the Church, shee came by him hardly, therefore shee will not part with him lightly; shee obtained him with much hazzard and danger, much losse and suffering, and therefore shee will not part with him for the greatest advantage in the world. Shee knows nothing in this great and wide universe, though never so love'y or desirable, can be equivalent to such a Jewell: shee knows that with him is the well-spring of life and all blessing; and therefore shee cannot be induced or perswaded upon any termes to part with him. Many of Christs followers forsooke him, and went no more with him: but, *will yee also forsake me,* saith he to his Apostles? Peter answers for himselfe, and the rest, *Lord whither shall we goe? thou hast the words of eternall life,* John 6. 68. As if he should have said, Lord, if we leave thee, we leave our life and our comfort, we forsake our owne mercy: it was motive enough to stay by him, and to keep close to him, to consider that eternall life, and consequently the very quintessence of all happinesse was with him. The Merchant that found a treasure of great price, *went and hid it,* and joyfully *sould all that he had* to purchase it, and therefore he will not part with it for any good. The Merchant man is an Embleme or figure of a Believer, who when he hath found Christ, will not forgoe him by any means; no, but will say of him, *Whom have I in Heaven but thee? And on Earth there is none that I desire in comparison of thee.* Christ is the strength of his heart, and his portion for ever, Psal. 73. 25, 26. It is the voyce of the Church, *The Lord is my portion,*

tion, saith the soule, not onely her tongue without, but even her soule and her Spirit within speaks it with unconceivable joy and delight, shee was in deep affliction when shee spake it, Lam. 3. 24. yet the apprehension of such a portion as the Lord, was solace and refreshing enough to her. And David is in the same mood too, *The Lord is my portion and mine inheritance* (saith he) *The lines are fallen to me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage,* Psal. 16. 5, 6. He alludes to the manner of dividing the Land of Canaan to the Children of Israel, which was done by line. Now unspeakable happy are all those that have such an heritage: can we thinke they will part with it? No verily, they will not so dote on any thing in the world as to leave heaven for earth, infinite and eternall joyes for a short blaze, or a little flash of myrth: they will not part with such an inheritance as Christ is, rich, fat, alwayes fruitfull, and never decaying. An inheritance where there is no dirt, no winter or withering, no dying or decaying of fruits, but ever green, ever flourishing, ever bearing, infinitely profitable and delightfull to the Possessors of it.

Naboth would not part with the heritage of his Fathers, no more will the Saints part with theirs. Thus for the Churches taking hold of, and keeping her beloved. Now follows her drawing of him into her Mothers mansion.

Untill I had brought him into my Mothers house, and into the Chamber of her that conceived me.

These words declare how effectually the Church did lay hold upon Christ, that so shee retained him

to

to dwell with her for ever. The expression which the Church useth here, *My Mothers house, &c.* signifies a chief City, or solemne place of assembly.

But now it may be demanded, What Mother bath the Church? And who is shee that conceived her? Is there any Spouse of Christ but one?

I answer, there is but one mysticall body of Christ, and one Spouse: but always that part of the Church on Earth, is called the Daughter of the Church of former times: and Christians doe beget Christians and the new Church came forth of the old Church. Or, the whole Church is the Mother of each part, as in the usuall phrase of Hebrew speech. Now of old the Temple and Sanctuary might be the Chamber of her that conceived; that is, the place where they of the former Church did meet. So now Jerusalem that is above, is called *the Mother of us all*, Gal. 3. which was figured by Sarah the free woman, and signifieth the Covenant of grace, Gal. 4. 24. Now the house and Chamber wherein we are conceived, by the Gospel of the Covenant of grace, is outwardly the Church, but inwardly the heart where faith dwelleth, Rom. 10. Now into this house the Church saith shee will lead her beloved; we may take it eyther.

1. For her leading of him into the Church, and displaying of Christs goodnesse manifested to her soul, to others. Or,

2. For her leading Christ down into her own soul; enlarging her owne affections by dilating upon the copious theme of his divine love, delighting in a close and neer communion with him.

From the first of these Interpretations, Observe, *That the Saints having received consolation from Christ,*

doe labour to make others partakers of the same comfort. Here the Spouse having found her beloved, manifesting his love and favour to her, saith, I will bring him into my Mothers house, to wit, into the Church, and assembly of Saints, to spread all his goodnesse discovered unto me. Shee bringeth her beloved home, that so he may not onely dwell with her, but also be a solace to her Mothers Children; shee doth labour to communicate the comfort of Gods Spirit unto others, that so they may rejoyce with her. Thus Philip, who finding Nathanael, did with much joy manifest the finding of Christ, *John* 1. 45. Thus was the Woman of Samaria, who having found the Messiah, could not but cast her Pitcher aside, and goe into the City, to reveale that comfort to others, *John* 4. 28, 29. Nor can there be any soule that finds the sweet discoveries of Christs love, but there is likewise a strong desire to acquaint others with their souls comfort. It is an easier thing to carry fire in the bosome, then to conceale spirituall comfort. *We cannot* (saith the Apostle) *but speake the things which we have seene and heard* *Acts* 4. 20. As it doth much lessen our comfort to conceale the thing we know, so it doth much increase and enlarge our comfort, to make known our enjoyments to others.

From the second Interpretation, to wit, that the Spouse entertaineth him to dwell in her heart: Observe,

That it doth not content the Saints to have some slight apprehension of Christ, but they desire to lead him into the inner Chambers of their minds, that he may dwell in their hearts. So the Spouse here had apprehended her beloved, and shee doth not satisfie her selfe untill shee hath

bath led him downe into the inmost corner of her heart. Then it is that the Spouse liveth, or Christ liveth in her, *Gal. 2. 20.* the Church is called upon by the holy Ghost to open the Gates, and everlasting doors, (that is, the doors of their hearts) And (Christ) the King of glory shall come in, *Psal. 24.* Shee doth open the gates and the doors and leadeth him in. What good thing can be wanting where the King of glory shall enter in to dwell? He is the Lord of Hosts who is strong and mighty in Battaille, who will subdue sin, and put the Prince of darknesse to flight; yea, he will chase away all evill where he dwelleth. No marvaile then that the Church will not let him goe, but leadeth him into the Chambers of her that conceived her.

Lastly, in that the Church is called the Mother of the Church.

Hence Observe,

That the Church doth nourish her owne Members. Saints are nourished and cherished among Saints: Hence they are bid to rejoyce with *Jerusalem*, &c. *That they may suck and be satisfied with the Breasts of her consolation, that they may milke out, and be delighted with the brightnesse of her glory, Isa. 66. 11.* And to the Church of beleivers pertaineth all the glorious priviledges which did of old pertaineto *Israel*, as the Apostle telleth us in *Rom. 9. 4, 5.* To whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the Covenants, and the giving of the Law, and the service of God, and the promises: of whom are the Fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is ever all, God blessed for ever. Amen. It followeth,

VERS. 3.

Charge you, O yee daughters of Jerusalem, by the Roes, and
Hinds of the field, that yee stir not up, nor awake my love,
till he please.

THe Spouse having long sought her beloved, and
now having found him, and brought him home
unto her Mothers house, and resolved to retaine him
there, reneweth her contestation and charge to the
Daughters of Jerusalem, not to awake or disquiet her
beloved.

These words being the same with the words in
Chap. 2. 7. I shall not stand upon repetitions, but
only mind you of the occasion of the repetition of
them.

1. Consider the Church having found her be-
loved, and is very willing to keep him, and to injoy
sweet fellowship with him; shee giveth this straight
charge to the Daughters, that they doe not provoke
him by sin, and so grieve his holy Spirit, and thereby
cause him to depart from his Church againe. For as
Moses said unto Israel, *If yee turne away from after him,
he will yet againe leave them in the Wildernesse, and yee shall
destroy all this people,* Numb. 32. 15. And the like
place we have in Exod. 23. 20, 21. *Behold (saith the
Lord) I send an Angell before thee to keep thee in the way,
and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared: be-
ware of him, and obey his voyce, provoke him not, for he will
not pardon your transgressions, for my name is in him.* The
Angell here spoken of, is Christ, as appears by this,
that he hath power to pardon sin, and Gods name is
H h h in

in him: for Gods name and attributes are his very essence. Thus the Apostle willetth us not to provoke Christ; when he saith, *Grieve not the holy Spirit*, and wilhall addeth this reason, *Because* (saith he) *ye are sealed unto the day of redemption*, Ephes. 4. 30. So on the other hand, we must please the Spirit, by being acted by it, leaft we turne away the seale or assurance of our salvation. Or,

2. We may take it thus; the Daughters were charged to wait patiently for Christs coming in the flesh, and to be contented with their present enjoyment of Christ, that they should not stir him up, or provoke him by murmuring, or otherwise, through feare or unbelieve: neither was ther to be discontent to suffer affliction, as being under the Law, being strung up unto the faith that should be revealed, which Law was a *School-master* unto Christ, Gal. 3. 23. for the Saints were under Governours, untill the appointed time of the Father, Gal. 4. 1, 2.

So much for the Charge.

VERS. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11.

Who is this that cometh out of the Wilderness like pillars of smoake, perfumed with Myrrhe and Frankincense, with all powders of the Merchant.

Behold his Bed which is Solomons: threescore valiant men are about it, of the valiant of Israel.

They all hold Swords, being expert in war, every man hath his sword upon his Thigh, because of feare in the night.

King Solomon made himselfe a Chariot of the wood of Libanon.

He made the pillars thereof of Silver, the bottome thereof of gold, the covering of it of purple, the middest thereof being paved with love, for the Daughters of Jerusalem.

She saith, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold King Solomon, with the Crowne wherewith his mother Crowned him in the day of his Espousalls, and in the day of the gladnesse of his heart.

IN the former part of the Chapter the Church sought Christ, and never gave over seeking untill shee had found him, and brought him home into her Mothers house, and into the Chambers of her that conceived her. Christ discovereth himselfe sweetly unto his Spouse, but not that his Spouse should be content with her present apprehension of him, but that shee should ascend higher and higher, even unto the Chambers of his heavenly Palace, for to that end and purpose doth he come downe unto her. Here therefore is shewed the effect of this her finding and laying hold of him, namely, that he hath perfumed her with his sweet graces, and made her fit and meet to ascend up with him unto his royall place, which is here described in the sequell of the Chapter.

Christ himselfe is here introduced, as admiring and wondering at his Churches appearance, and coming out of the Wildernesse. Hereupon his Spouse taketh occasion to speake of his excellency, by way of praise and wonderment.

For the 6. ver. it utters a description of the Church,

1. In respect of her low condition.
2. In respect of her heavenly qualification.

Her despised and low condition is laid downe in these words, *Who is shee that commeth out of the Wildernesse.*

H h h 2

Her

Her qualification, in the other part of the verse.

First, In respect of the forme of her appearance, which is said to be like Pillars of smoake.

Secondly, In respect of her odoriferous ointment, and perfume, in these words, *Perfumed with myrrhe and Frankincense, with all powders of the Marchant.*

Who is this, &c.

Some understand this of the Churches admiring of her selfe, as if she should say, *who is this*, to wit, beside my selfe, that doth thus ascend? and that she doth, as it were correct her selfe, in respect of her former speech, speaking thus, what should I cause him to remaine with me? nay rather I should strive to enter into his Pallace, who hath all things most faire, and well furnished, and exceeding sweet, and well smelling, yea, whose very Bed, and Bed-Chamber is much more glorious, then all *Solomons* royalty, which she afterwards commendeth.

Or, we may take it, for Christs admiring his owne graces in his Spouse; as if he should say, *who is this*, but my Spouse, that seekes me with such eagernes, and is so impatient of my absence, and so revived at my presence; and that holds me so fast, as not to let me goe? This is usuall with Christ, to bestow his owne graces, and stampe his owne image upon us: and then to admire his image and graces in us.

Again, Others take it to be meant of a new Company or state of a Church rising up in the world: and so admired of the old Church. The description of the Church followeth.

That

That commeth out of the Wildernesse, &c.

Commeth, or ascendeth, as it is said of Jerusalem, They went up to Jerusalem, and of Egypt, they went downe עלה
Ascendit.
to Egypt, Gen. 42. 2. So that the spouse ascendeth upward, The way of wisdom is on high to the wise, that he may depart from Hell beneath, Prov. 15. 24. Grace, glorie, and comfort come from above, and draw our minds upward, and our desires to be above, so as to sit together with Christ in heavenly places, as the Apostle saith, and to have our conversation in heaven.

From the Wildernesse.

The Wildernesse of the Land of Egypt, was a figure of the world; as appeares in Ezek. 20. 35, 36. And I will bring you into the Wildernesse of the people, and there will I speak with you face to face, like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wildernesse of the Land of Egypt, &c. That is, as if the Lord had said, I will drive you into the most solitary and savage places of the world, for a fulnesse of miserie.

Now this world may aptly be compared to a Wildernesse, because as it is commonly full of hurtfull and noysome things, so is the world. Also we may apply it to the corrupt nature of man, and his miserable estate thereby. In a Wildernesse there is no tilling, no sowing, no planting, no dressing; but all lyeth wast, barren and desolate. Even so it is with all man-kinde, by nature there is nothing but barrennesse.

Hence Observe,

First, That the World is like a Wildernesse.

God

God planteth, tilleth and dresseth his Church, for she is (as the Apostle saith) Gods husbandrie, 1 Cor. 2. she is made fruitfull to the Lord : but the whole world beside, out of which she ascendeth, doth remaine as a most desolate and barren Wildernesse; there groweth in it not any good thing, nothing that hath sweetnesse or savour with it; but all noysome and unfavourie weeds grow there : A Wildernesse is clothed withino beauty at all; it is no place of habitation, but only for wild beasts.

Secondly Observe

That it is a hard thing to leave the world with its vanities, and to lift up our mindes and affection unto heaven.

So here the Church is taken up into admiration, for her leaving of the world, and ascending upward, *who is this that cometh out of the Wildernesse?* *Eccl. 1.* that can forsake the world and lusts, to ascend up unto me? as if Christ had said so: when Christ came riding unto *Jerusalem*, all the Cite was moved saying, *who is this?* *Matth. 21. 10.* The people admired him. So the Spouse is here, as it were admired, that she can forsake her carnal lusts and corruptions, and worldly all enjoyments, and ascend up to Jesus Christ. Now followeth her qualifications, and first in respect of her appearance, which is said to be.

Like Pillars of smoke.

The Pillars of smoke here mentioned, may be taken from the fierie pillar of the night, and the cloudy pillar of the day, by which the Israelites were conducted through the Wildernesse, from *Egypt* to *Canaan*: And in that it is said *Pillars of smoke* meaning that the

Saints

Spouse ascend up directly and upright, like pillars of
smoake, and so are called by comparison.

Againe, as smoake is darke, and hindreth the cleare
sight of any thing, as the cloudy pillar was darke to the
Exod. 14. 20. so is the glorie and beauty
of the Spouse to the carnall eye, and she is very obscure
in the world, because of her afflictions in this life, which
were resembled unto Abraham by a smoking Oven,

Gen. 15. 17. On lastly, by pillars of smoake may be meant the fan-
cies and holiness of the Spouse: and then the ex-
piation is taken from the sacrifice under the Law, of
which the earthly matter was turned into ashes, and
the other part ascended up in a flame of fire, as appears,
Lev. 16. 1. So the spiritual sacrifice of
the Spouse, ascendeth up to God, on the Altar
Christ, by the flaming fire of the Spirit, resolving the
earthly matter to ashes remaining beneath, and the o-
ther to smoake ascending up to God. Thus the Spouse
ascends like Pillars of smoake: her qualification in re-
spect of odour and perfume followeth.

Perfumed with myrrhe and frankincense, with all the
powders of the Marchant.

Perfumed, or, becessed with myrrhe, to wit, perfumed
with the sweet graces of the Spirit, and made a sweet
odour by Christ unto God. The Spouses appearance
is sweetly set down under precious atomatick odours,
where with she is perfumed: but indeed she receiveth
all from her divine head, who is the fountaine of all
spirituall odours, as appears in Psal. 45. 8. Now these
odours are no other then the sweet graces of Christs
Spirit,

Spirit, communicated with his Members, wherewith Christ (as by the reflection of his owne Spirit) is infinitely delighted.

And frankincense, Myrrhe was one of the first ingredients that was used in the holy oyle, and frankincense in sweet perfume, *Exod. 30. 23, 34.* which perfume, prefigured the mediation of Christ, the Angell that offered much incense with the prayers of the Saints: that is, he mixeth the precious odours of his merits with the sacrifices of the Saints, making their prayer and praises finde acceptance with God, as *Alc. 10. 31.* And thus is the Church also made, through the intercession of Christ, to be sweet and savourie, as it is said in *Psal. 45. All her garments are Myrrhe, Aloes and Cassia.* The Saints then are very redolent, and savourie through Christ.

It is added,

With all powders of the Merchant.

With all powder, or, above all dust (that is, dust or powder of spices) of the Merchant. The word translated *Merchant*, signifies such a one, as selleth all sorts of sweet smelling things. Our Grossers here among us, but especially our Apothecaries, have their shoppes stuffed with such favours, and are most often in the compounding of such things for smell, and therefore the word would not be ill turned *Apothecarie*, or *Ointment maker*. Such were the Priests under the Law which made the ointment of spices, in *Chron. 9. 30.*

Now if wee take the words thus, *above all powder*, &c. then the meaning is, that those sweet and heavenly graces wherewith Christ doth perfume his Saints, are

farre more comfortable and refreshing, then all the sweet powders or spices of the Merchant or Apothecarie.

Now from this qualification of the Churches, Observe.

First, *That the Saints in their approaches to God directly ascend by the golden Censer of our high Priest Jesus, unto God the Father.*

The Appearance of the Spouse in her approach to Christ, was like unto Pillars of smoake, which had resemblance with the cloud of incense, which erected it selfe in the (staight) forme of a palme-tree, as it ascended from the Altar. The Jewes were of opinion, that the smoake of the incense would not decline by any wind or blast, but ascend directly toward heaven: so the sacrifice of the godly, will ascend directly to God, by *Jesus Christ*.

Secondly Observe.

The Sacrifices of the Saints have a sweet acceptation with the Lord. Perfumed with myrrhe and frankincense, &c.

Thus Noahs sacrifice smelled of sweet rest, and it is said of the Gentils, *They shall come up with acceptance on his Altar, and he will glorifie the house of his glorie, Isa. 60.* And again he saith, *Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine Altar, Isa. 56. 6.* The Apostle telleth us in *Rom. 8. 26, 27.* *That the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit it selfe maketh intercession for us with groanings, which cannot be uttered, and he that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the minde of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the Saints, according to the will of God, So that God cannot but accept the prayer, which by the Spirit of his Sonne is sent into our hearts.*

Gal. 4. 6. of such heavenly odour is such prayer.

Thirdly, Observe.

That the heavenly perfume of the Spirit of grace, is farre above and excelleth all sweet spices.

Above all the powders of the Merchant. All the most delightfull things in the world, such as are the sweet spices of the ointment-maker, are not so odoriferous, as the Spirituall graces of the Saints; nor as Christ, in whom are all the treasures of God, *Col. 1. 19.* And as in respect of whom, all things in the world, are to be accounted, but *as losse and dung, Phil. 3. 8.*

VER'S. 7.

Behold his bed, that is Solomons: threescore valiant men are about it, of the valiant of Israel.

THE Church entereth into a commendation of Christs glorie, and safety: and she doth not only compare it with *Solomons*, but preferring it farre before it, and that by many degrees, as it will further appeare in the following words.

The Spouse amplifieth the excellencie of the bed of Christ and his Church, by comparing it with *Solomons*.

First, shee commendeth it for the safety and security thereof, in this verse, and vers. 8.

Secondly, shee commendeth his Charriot and rich furniture of the same, vers. 9, 10.

Lastly, She entereth into a commendation of Christs person, not only to set forth the glorie of her Husband, but also that thereby she might stirre up her affections
the

the more towards him, that was of such great state and magnificence.

In this 7. verse Christ is introduced (under the name of Solomon his type) circum-guarded on his bed, where we may Observe.

First, The bed he coucheth on.

Secondly, The guard placed about it.

The posture of this guard, and the end of their watching is contained in the verse following.

Behold his bed, which is Solomons.

Some read the words thus, *Behold the Bed which is a law, or better then that, which is Solomons.*

Solomon being derived of *Skalam*, doth signifie a man that is peaceable, yea, compleat for peace: and herein was a type of Christ, who was the Prince of peace, *Isa. 9. 6.* And is called our peace, *Ephes. 2.* through faith in him, we have peace with God the Father. Solomon, as in his name, so in his Kingly Office, wisdom, and royaltie, was a figure of the Messiah.

By the Bed, we may understand the hearts of the Saints, for there Christ doth use to rest and repose himselfe, as in a bed; he is said to lie all night betwixt the breasts of the Spouse, *Cant. 1. 13.* And Christ dwels in the heart by faith, *Ephes. 3. 7.* there he takes up his habitation and lodging, as in the Temple and Tabernacle of old; which were types of the spirituall Temple of Christ. The shadow is taken from the bed, and bride Chamber of King Solomon, who was a figure of him, that was to come; even our Prince of peace, who doth rest in his Saints, as in a bed, and makes his Saints likewise rest in him.

Hence Observe,

That Christ and his Church doe mutually rest and repose one in another. Behold his bed, &c. A Bed is for rest and sleep; now Christ doth inhabite in the Saints, as in 2 Cor. 6. *I will dwell in them, and walke in them.* He will dwell in the soule by his Spirit, and the soule doth rest and repose in the beloved. Now the Guard about this bed is described.

Threescore valiant men are about it, of the valiant of Israel.

This guard is described,

1. By the number, the number is three score, which is twice so many as David had for his ordinary guard, as appears, 2 Sam. 23. 13. 22. and this argues the double safety of all those with whom Christ resteth.

2. This guard is described by the qualification of those that watch; and this is done two ways.

First, From accidents Internall.

Secondly, Externall.

The internall is the fortitude of the Guarders, expressed in the words *strong*, and *valiant*, which in the Originall is all one word.

גִּבּוֹר
Prevaluit,
invaluit.

The word in the Hebrew signifies *prevailing strong*, insomuch as *Gebber* is sometimes turned a *man*, as the Latines terme him, *vir* of *virago*. The Greeks often turne it by *ἀνὴρ vir*, and sometimes by *ἀνδρῶν ἄνθρωπος*, man, or mighty one, Psal. 18. 26. Man is called *Gebber* by the Hebrews, because of his *strength*, and *valour*, and *superiority*, as in 2 Sam. 22. 26. man is called *Gibbor*, that is, a *strong Champion*, and a *mighty man*, Psal. 19. 6. So Nimrod was called *Gibbor*, Genes. 10. 8. that is, *mighty*.

on the Earth. Now further, these are declared
the valiant of Israel.

Israel signifies a prevailer with the strong God, it was the name given to Jacob, because he prevailed with God. Now what mighty valiants were in Israel, appeareth by those worthies that followed David, and engaged with him in his wars, of whom we read in 1 Chron. 11. 47. These figured out the strength and agility of the Saints, who should be able to resist temptation, and, as the Apostle saith, shall abide in him, and overcome the wicked one, 1 John 2. 14.

Some understand these mighty strong men to be the Prophets and Ministers of God, such as he called to be watchmen over the house of Israel, in whom the Lord dwelt mightily by his Spirit, and they were deputed to watch over the Church of God.

But I most of all thinke, it is meant of the safety of the Saints resting in Christ. It was and is the manner that Kings had a Guard about their lodgings, that they might be secured from harms. It appears by these words that King Solomon had every night threescore valiant men for his Guard, expert in Battail, that did keep the watch, that so he might sleep in safety. Here is also mention made that they are the valiant of Israel, they were such as might be trusted. Now Solomons Bed was Guarded by these valiant men of Israel, whereby is figured that the Saints rest free from danger and feare, in Christ.

Hence Observe,

That the Saints rest securely in Christ, and are strongly guarded against all dangers whatsoever. There be many enemies that seek to destroy the Spouse, all the infernal powers are set against her; all cruell and bloody

Ty-

ישראל
Componitur
ex שררה
principalem
obtinuit &
א
Deum: &
igitur
ישראל
Prin. e. s
dei, qui qui
principalem
potentiam
obtinuit
a deo.
H. 12. 3.

Tyrants breath out threatnings and terror, as if they would utterly destroy her, but having found her beloved, shee finds rest and peace in him. There can no enemy come neer the Spouse to hurt her, neither can any evill come neer her. Hence it is, when Christ comforteth his Disciples against the persecution of the world, he saith, *These things have I spoken unto you, that in me yee might have peace, in the world you shall have afflictions, but be of good comfort, for I have overcome the world,* John 16. 33. then however the cause stands with the Saints here in the world, they rest securely in Christ. This Guard is further described in the following words.

VER S. 8.

They all hold Swords, being expert in war, every man hath his Sword upon his Thigh, because of the feare of the night.

IN this Verse these men of the guard are described by a second qualification, and that is externall. This is denoted by *their hands holding the Sword*, by which posture they shew themselves to be expert in war, and their readinesse to fight, having every man his sword upon his thigh. And lastly, the end of all this watching, *because of the feare of the night.*

They all hold Swords, &c.

They hold or, are apprehended of the Sword: that is girded about with it: what this Sword is, may appear from Heb. 4. 12. namely, the living power of the word

word of God, and is called in *Revel. 1. 16.* A two edged sword; and the *Sword of the Spirit*, *Ephes. 6. 17.* And hence the Apostle uses the terme of *holding forth the word of life*, *Phil. 2. 16.*

Being expert in war.

Expert, or taught, God is said to *teach the fingers of his people to war*, and their hands to fight. So they are taught of God to use the *Sword of the Spirit*, that so they wax skilfull in the *Lords Battells*, and have their senses exercised to *discerne good and evil*, *Heb. 5. 14.* That is; they that are tried of God, and have experience, are such as have their senses exercised, or *sharpened*, as the Greeke word signifies. So that here the Saints are commended for their skill and dexterity.

Now followeth their readinesse to fight.

Every man hath his Sword upon his thigh.

This was the manner and custome of the people of the Jews, to stand with their swords, as appears in that it is said unto Christ, *Gird thy Sword upon thy Thigh, O mighty one*, *Psal. 45. 4.* This denotes readinesse in the Spouse to fight against all her enemies, in the use of all her spirituall weapons. Thus the Lord appointed the Children of Israel to *put every man his sword by his side, and to goe in and out from gate to gate, throughout the Camp, and slay every man his Brother, and every man his Companion, and every man his Neighbour.* So the Saints are ready (as with Swords upon their thighs) to stand against, and resist their spirituall adversaries.

Now

Now followeth the end; or the reason of this strict Guard.

Because of the feare of the night.

Feare, or terrour in the night. The night is a time of the greatest feare and dread, and the time of most evill and cruell actions: Christ compares his last coming to a *Thiefe in the night*, because it will be suddaine and dreadfull to some. The greatest dangers are for the most part by night, as the Disciples were in perill of drowning in the fourth watch of the night, *Mark. 14. 25.* And at night the Angell smote the first-borne of *Egypt*, *Exod. 11.* And as for Thefts, Murders, and other such like mischiefs, they are often done in the night, as appears, *Job 24. 14. The murderer rising with the light, killeth the poore and needy, and in the night is as a Thiefe.* And the enemies of *Judah* said, *Let us goe up by night, and destroy her Palaces,* *Jer. 6. 5.* Therefore the night is a time wherein we need to stand armed, and to be ready upon our watch, as we have example in *Nehem. 4. 22.* Those that laboured in the day, were a Guard in the night. So the Saints are to fight with the *Prince of darknesse*, and to withstand the powers of the world, and against *spirituall wickednesse in high places*: therefore it is needfull, that they stand upon their Guard, putting on the whole *Armour of God*, that they may be able to stand in the evill day: we must therefore stand with our loines girt about with truth, having on the Brest-plate of righteousness, *Ephes. 6. 12. 14.*

Hence Observe,

That the Saints are always to keep a spirituall Guard about them. They are alwayes to take hold of the Sword

Sword of the Spirit: he that wants his materiall Sword is not fit for the field of this world, no more is he for the regiment of Christ, that wants his spirituall Sword. And then Christians had need be expert and skilfull in applying of the Sword of the Spirit, and not onely expert, but alwayes ready, *having their loins girt*, that is, being filled with strength and valour, because of spirituall wickednesse that war against them, and seeke to destroy them. It followeth.

VERS. 9.

King Solomon made himsele a Charriot of the wood of Lebanon.

AS the former Verse, so this and the following Vers. must be taken for the speech of the Spouse; or at least an Apostrophe of the Spirit to a Christian hearer. It delivereth a narration touching some glorious frame made by *Solomon*, who was a type of our Mysticall *Solomon*. What this building may properly be called, is hard to say: the Hebrew word *Phorion* is not found elsewhere in Scripture, it seems to be derived of *Parah*, which signifies to *flourish*, and *bring forth fruit*. Some take it to be meant of some stately Pallace built by *Solomon*. Some turne it, a *Horse-litter*, or *Charriot*, and so it signifieth any thing that is carried in pomp and state; and herein it seemeth to be holpen by the Greeke, where it is *Phoreion*, which is an instrument to carry, as a *Horse-litter*, or the like.

Arius Montanus turnes it a *Bed-Chamber*, namely, such a one as is prepared for the Bride and the Bride-

Vile, Rab.
Solomoth,
and Rab.
Abraham.

groome to lodge in; so that according to this version it must be meant of the royall and sumptuous Bride-Chamber, which *Solomon* built in his owne Pallace, which was for the Daughter of *Pharaoh*, King of *Ægypt*, whom *Solomon* married, and for whom he built an house, as appears, *1 Kings* 9. 24.

The *Jewes* that knew not Christ, applyed this to the Tabernacle, others to the Temple, unto which the Church of the Jewes were called, after they came out of *Ægypt*, through the Wildernesse. But however the Temple was a figure of Christ, unto whom we must refer it, in respect of the spirituall mystery thereof. The Charriot here then is meant, of the Spouse the mysticall body of Christ, which by the preaching and profession of the Gospell, carrieth Christ up and downe, as in a Charriot, in the midst whereof Christ sitteth, to teach, direct, and governe: So that Christ rideth up and downe gloriously in his Saints, who hold forth the word of truth, and professe his name before men, and glorify him on Earth.

Hence Observe,

That the Saints by holding forth the word of truth, doe carry Christ gloriously as in a Charriot. The Saints are called Christs garments in *Psal.* 45. *All thy Garments smell of myrre, &c.* Christ would be as it were naked in the world, were it not for his Saints: so he doth onely ride gloriously, and prosper in his Saints, riding and triumphing in their souls, as in his Charriot of state, wherein he is glorified. Now followeth the externall matter of this building.

Of the wood of Lebanon.

Trees of Lebanon, that is, of Cedar-wood that grew on

on *Lebanon*: these Trees were *Cedars*, an uncorrupt-
ing wood, well representing the Spouse in her rege-
nerate estate, and therein Christ triumpheth. Every
believer is a *Cedar* growing in the Courts of God, *Psal.*
92. 12. The *Cedar* coveteth to grow on the Moun-
tains, and especially they grow upon the high Moun-
taine of *Lebanon*: which word *Lebanon* of *Laban*, sig-
nifieth *white*, it may be from gum or frankincense
whitenesse, issuing from the Trees of that Mountaine.
All which may resemble the purity and righteousnesse
of the Saints. The Saints are like the Cedars of *Le-
banon*, which bring forth fruit in their age, growing
from strength to strength; in comparison of whom,
all the men of the world are but shrubs. It was of
Cedar that *Solomon* built the Temple, and all his glori-
ous buildings: So it is of Saints that Christ makes
his Temple, his Bed, his Charriot, he rides glorious
in the hearts and mouths of his Saints, by the word
of truth and righteousnesse. Now followeth a par-
ticular description of all the parts of this Charriot.

VER S. 10.

*He made the Pillars thereof of silver, the bottome thereof
of gold, the covering of it of purple: the midst thereof
being paved with love, for the Daughters of Jerusalem.*

AS the Spouse had in the verse before, spoken of
Christs Charriot in generall: so now shee com-
meth to describe it by peece-meale, as it were, affir-
ming that the *pillars were of silver, the bottome Gold, &c.*
all which is taken from the glory of *Solomon's* Char-

riot, which must needs excell in outward glorie. This Chariot is the Church wherein Christ rideth in triumph and glorie : Or else by the Chariot, wee may understand that with which he carries his Saints up and downe in the world.

He made the Pillars thereof of silver.

There were two Pillars in the Temple, the one called *Jachin*, the other *Boaz*, as much as to say, *stabilitie*, and *strength*, and so in the Church of the New-Testament, *James*, *Cephas* and *John*, are called Pillars, Gal. 2. 9. because by preaching the doctrine of Christ, they did, as it were sustaine the Chariot of the Church, by the word of truth. So in Prov. 9.

Wisedome built her house, and bewed out her seven Pillars : The truths of Christ are as so many pillars to sustaine the Church.

Hence Observe.

That the Truths of Christ, are the Pillars of the Church.

The word of God is likened to refined silver, in Psal. 12. and here to *Pillars of silver*, to beare up and sustaine the Chariot of Christ ; to wit, his Church. There are many contentions in the world, and most strive for Mastership, but he is most like to prevaile, that hath truth on his side; for truth is a strong Pillar, and more able to uphold us, then wee are to uphold it. She goeth on further to describe the Chariot.

The bottome thereof of gold.

This bottome, or seate of gold, seemeth to have reference

rence to the golden mercy seate, over the Arke in the Temple, on which God is said to sit, *Psal.* 80. 2. *As on the Cherubims*, which were upon the Arke of the Covenant, in the Sanctuarie from whence God gave Oracles to his people, when they sought unto him, as appeares, *Exod.* 25. 22. So here the bottome or seate of this Chariot, on which the Saints doe rest on, may betaken for the doctrines, faith and grace, whereon they rest, as on a sure foundation.

Hence Observe.

That the Saints rest upon a sure foundation.

The Covenant of grace apprehended by faith, is more precious than gold and silver, *1 Pet.* 1. 7. The Saints rest on a bottome of gold, to wit, the sure word of God, which the Apostle calls a sure word of prophesie, *2 Pet.* 1. 19. And the Apostle tels us, that *Christ is our only foundation*, *1 Cor.* 3. 11. And in verse 12. he saith, *Now if any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stone, &c.* By these are signified solid, precious, divine truths and revelations of God, pure doctrines, and the like. The Prophet *Isaiah*, and so *John* in his revelation tels us, that the heavenly Citie, the new *Jerusalem* was to be built of gold, silver, and precious stones.

A third description of this Chariot followeth.

The covering of it of purple.

By the covering may be meant the ornaments or hangings about the Chariot. *Purple*, was the garment of the vertuous woman, to wit, the Church in *Prov.* 31. 22. and purple was the garment also of the fornicatrix, to wit, the false Church, *Revel.* 17. 4. Purple was a Kingly

Kingly cloathing, for in such cloathing the Jewes put Christ, when they would declare him King, though with their affections derided him. And as the false Church would be accounted honourable and glorious, so she puts upon her the royall colours of Christ. Purple is a certain juyce had from a shel-fish of that name, which fishes it is said, *Cum vita succum eum evomit*, together with their lives losse, they doe evomite this purple juyce. Upon which consideration it hath the colour of blood. This princely colour denotes unto us the heavenly glorie of the Saints, as also the blood and death of Christ, in the participation wherof a Christian becomes beautifull and glorious.

Hence Observe.

That the Saints, by participating in the blood of Christ, and being cloathed with his righteousness, are made very glorious.

Christ is said to have *washed us in his blood*; and *make us Kings and Priests unto God*, &c. Revel. 1. 5. And in Revel. 7. 14. The Saints are they which *came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb*. It is the greatest dignitie and glorie of believers, that they are made cleane and pure by the blood of the Lamb.

Thus the Chariot of Christ is made up.

First, Of the silver Pillars of his word and truth.

Secondly, Of the Covenant of grace, as on the bottom of gold, whereon the Saints rest.

And lastly, Of the purple and glorious ornaments, which is given the Saints through his blood. It followeth.

Plin. lib.
9. cap 36.

The midst thereof being paved with love, for the daughters of Jerusalem.

The *middest*, is to be taken for the inmost part of the Chariot, which is said to be paved with love, that is, wrought with lovely workes, whereby the daughters of Jerusalem (to wit, the elect of God) are drawne unto God himselfe, by the feeling of his love towards them.

Hence Observe.

That Christ drawes his people unto himselfe by a principle of love.

Hence it is, That the Chariot wherein Christ carries his people in, *is paved with love*. Christ doth so affectionately love his Spouse, that he doth ingrave her on the palms of his hands, *Isa. 49. 16.* and carrieth her upon his heart, as the high Priest bare the names of the Children of *Israel*, on his pectorall or breast-plate, to wit on his heart, *Exod. 28. 29.* Christ doth display the banner of love over the soule, and so draweth it after himselfe. Such as is the love of Christ, is the pavement of his Coach. Thus farre the description of Christs chariot.

Now followoweth the description of his person.

VER S.

VERS. II.

Go forth O ye Daughters of Zion, & behold King Solomon with the Crowne wherewith his Mother Crowned him in the day of his Espousalls, and in the day of the gladnesse of his heart.

Solomon being advanced, the people of Jerusalem are called forth to behold his glory, but under this, Christ and his people are most intended: the Saints are onely fit to contemplate upon Jesus Christ, and Christ onely affords matter of heavenly speculation. For the better understanding of these words, observe,

First, The persons called out, and they be the daughters of Zion, *Come forth O yee daughters of Zion, &c.*

Secondly, The end of their being so called out, and that is, to *Behold or contemplate on King Solomon.*

Thirdly, The description of Solomon, and this is done, by introducing him crowned.

The Crowne is made excellent.

First, In respect of the person that crownes him, and that is his mother.

Secondly, In respect of the time of his coronation: and that is the time,

First, Of his marriage.

Secondly, Of his hearts rejoycing.

Come forth O ye daughters of Zion, &c.

Zion, was a glorious Fort, seated in an upper place of Jerusalem, inhabited of the Jebusites, before David surprised it: but afterward it was called the Citie of Da-

with 2 Sam. 5. 2. 7. The word in English signifieth a *Looking-glasse, or a prospective figure*: a terme well besitt-
ing it, because it was a watch Tower over *Jerusalem*. It
was called the *holy Citie*, and the *Lords mountaine*, *Isa.*
5. 2. Joel. 3. 17. because the Temple was built there.

The Daughters of *Zion*, were the women dwelling
therein, but all men and women are comprised in the
phrase; so were all Townes and Cities called daugh-
ters to the Mother *Zion*. The Daughters figured out
the Saints of God, which are also called Virgins, and
doe follow the Lamb, *Revel. 14. 14.* These Daughters
are called forth to a further degree of knowledge, and
out of their former estate.

Hence Observe.

*That the Saints are called out of their darke estate, they are
in by nature, unto a state of more knowledge by the Spirit
of Christ.*

*Ye are called out of darknesse into marveilous light, saith
the Apostle, 1 Pet. 2. 9. And so saith the Prophet, The peo-
ple that sate in darknesse have seene a great light, they that
dwelt in the Land of the shadow of death, upon them hath light
shined, Isa. 9. 2.*

Now followeth the end for which the Daughters of
Zion are thus called out.

And behold King Solomon, with his Crowne, &c.

Under *Solomon* is meant Christ (whom *Solomon* figu-
red in his Kingdome) crowned with glorie and ho-
nour in his Church. The Daughters of *Zion* are called
forth to behold his glorie and dignitie, his worth and
excellencie, even with his Crowne or diadem, where-
with he was invested. Thus it was said to *John*, Come
and see, *Revel. 1.* And againe, Tell ye the daughters of *Zion*,

Behold thy King in Matth. 21. 15. So here behold King Solomon with his Crowne of glorie, and dominion and victorie.

Hence Observe.

That the Saints are called forth to behold and contemplate the excellencies of Christ.

It Shebaes Queene came from the uttermost parts of the earth, to behold Solomons glorie; how much more should wee come forth of our lusts, and from the world, to contemplate on his glorie, who is farre greater then Solomon, Matth. 12. 42. for by so Beholding him though as in a mirror, we are changed into his image, from glorie to glorie, as by the Spirit of the Lord, 2 Cor. 3. 18. But how shall the naturall man behold Christ in his glorie, when as he perceiveth not the things of God, for they are foolishnesse to him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned, 1 Cor. 2. 14. Then let the Daughters of Zion come forth, for they only can contemplate on the spirituall glorie of Christ, and can judge aright thereof.

Now followeth the description of our Solomon, to wit, Christ, and this is by introducing him crowned. This Crowne is made excellent, First, In respect of the person that crownes him.

The Crowne wherewith his Mother crowned him.

Christs mysticall Mother is the Church of the faithfull, that with the Apostle, travaileth till Christ be formed in her. The Saints by faith, do spiritually conceive and bring forth Christ, Gal. 4. 19. And Christ faith, they that doe his will, are his Sisters and Mothers, Mat. 12. 50. It is most true that God hath advanced Christ, and set the crowne of glorie and dominion

nion upon him, *Psal. 8. Heb. 2. 9.* but yet withall, his Mother doth also after a sort, set the Crowne of glorie upon his head. Seeing the Spouse is the fullnesse of him that filleth all in all, *Ephes. 1. 21.* and the Church is said sometimes to be the Mother of Christ, *Rev. 12.*

As for the Crowne it is a signe of victorie and dominion, *Psal. 21.* And when Christ fighteth with his enemies, He hath on his head many crownes or diadems, *Revel. 19. 11. 12.* So when Christ ruleth over the Saints, they by their submission doe put a Crowne upon his head, acknowledging his power.

Hence Observe.

First, That Christ is invested with a Crowne of sovereignty and power. He is crowned with glorie and honour, *Psal. 8. 5.* The Father hath exalted him, and put all things under his feet, *Heb. 2.* and hath given all things into his hands, *John 3. 35.*

Secondly Observe.

That Christ is crowned with honour and dignitie by his Church.

As the Father hath honoured his Sonne, by setting a Crowne upon his head, and putting a Scepter into his hand: so the Saints by submitting unto his Law, and authority, doe honour him also, acknowledging all his dignitie, that the Father hath put upon him. Thus it is said of the Church of the Gentiles, that they should be a Crowne in the hand of the Lord, and a royall diadem in the hand of God, *Isa. 62. 3.* The Apostle calleth such, as he had gained by the preaching of the Gospell, his Crowne and glorie, *Phil. 4. 1.* How much more may Christ himselfe account his Church, which he hath purchased by his owne blood, his crowne and glorie. This Crowne is also made excellent from the circumstance of time.

In the day of his espousals, &c.

This must needs be meant of the time, when Christ was espoused to his Church; even the day of the Covenant made betwixt Christ and his people, *Ezek. 16. 8.* And the Lord saith unto Jerusalem: *I remember thee, the kindnesse of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the Wildernesse, Jer. 2. 2.*

Hence Observe,

That the Saints are espoused unto Christ. This is that which the Apostle tels the Corinthians, when he saith, *For I have espoused you unto one Husband, that I might present you as a chaste Virgin to Christ, 2 Cor. 11. 2.* And the Lord saith, *I will betroth thee unto me, &c. Hos. 2. 19.* that is, I will establish my Covenant of grace with thee to forgive thy sins, and to take no notice of thy unworthinesse. Now followeth the second circumstance of time

And in the day of the gladnesse of his heart.

These words plainly intimate, that Christ did not only marrie himselfe unto his Spouse, but also that he did it freely with a glad some spirit.

Hence Observe,

That the espousing of the Saints unto Christ, is matter of great joy unto him. Thus it is said in the Prophet, *As the Bridegroom rejoyceth over the Bride, so shall thy God rejoyce over thee, Isa. 62. 5.* So that looke with what kind embracings, and what great affection, a bridegroom receiveth his Bride, with the same, and greater doth Christ receive his people. So much for the third Chapter.

CANT.

CANTICLES

Chap. IIII.

VERS. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

*Behold thou art faire my love, behold thou art faire, thou hast
Doves eyes within thy locks, thy haire is as a flock of Goats,
that appeare from Mount Gilead.*

*Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep, that are even shorn, which
come up from the washing: whereof every one bare twins,
and none is barren among them.*

*Thy lips are like a thred of scarlet, and thy speech is comely,
thy temples are like a peece of pomgranate within thy locks.*

*Thy neck is like the Tower of David, builded for an armory,
whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all sheilds of
mighty men.*

*Thy two breasts are like two young Roes that are twins, which
feed among the Lilies.*



TO the end that the Church might well
know and feele, that her love towards
Christ, and her seeking after him, was
not lost, as also she did not commend
him in vaine, all which things were
largely handled in the former Chap-
ter: it pleaseth Jesus Christ the bridegroom and head
of

of his Spouse in this Chapter, to commend the excellency of his Church, as in sundrie speciall parts of the same : and also delareth his singular love to her againe, and doth as it were assure her of the same.

This Chapter may be divided in two parts.

The First is a singular comendation, that Christ giveth to the Church, which beginneth at the first verse, and so holdeth on to the 14. wherein also there are three parts.

First, An excellent and singular description (handled allegorically) of the parts and Members of the Church, he putting downe seven in number, this is contained in the five first verses of the Chapter.

Secondly, Christ professeth his great & wonderfull love towards the Church, making large promises, and also describing notable wayes unto her, vers. 6, 7, 8, 9.

Thirdly, Christ againe returneth to commend his Spouse, with all those excellent graces, that were so sweet, delightfull, and pleasurable in her, from verse 10. to verse 14.

The second part of the Chapter contains an excellent speech of the Church, with Christs answer to the same, verse 15, 16, 17.

In the Churches speech, there is,

First, A commendation of her head Christ, uers. 15.

Secondly, A desire of all good things to flow downe from her head Christ unto her selfe, acknowledging all her enjoyments to be from him, vers. 16.

In Christs answer, there is contained a promise of his most gracious acceptation of such fruits, as his Spouse should yeild unto him.

VERS. 1.

Behold thou art faire my love, behold thou art faire, &c.

Here beginneth Christs commendations of his Church, and first he commendeth her beauty in generall, in the words, *Behold, thou art faire my love, &c.* And afterwards he entereth into a particular commendation of her severall parts and members. And

1. *Of her Eyes, vers. 1.*
2. *Of her Haire, vers. 1.*
3. *Of her Teeth, vers. 2.*
4. *Of her Lips, vers. 3.*
5. *Of her Temples, vers. 3.*
6. *Of her Necke, vers. 4.*
7. *Of her Breasts, ver. 5.*

Thus Christ enumerates and reckons up all the parts of the Church, which sheweth, what a pleasant harmony and specious consent of parts shee hath, whereby shee is exceeding beautifull. But first, of the praise in generall.

Behold thou art faire my Love, thou art faire.

When the Scripture doth prefix this word (*Behold*) to any sentence, it noteth for the most part a thing to be wondered at, as was noted in Chap. 1. 15.

Faire) or *beautifull*, not onely in colour, but in comely proportion and elegancy, such as draweth love and liking. This is meant of the graces of the spirit, and that spirituall beauty wherewith God in Christ hath beautified his beloved Spouse.

My love) or, *my fellow-friend, my Companion*: סוֹנָא פַּוִּי,
sona Pavir,
med comed.

פֶּה
Pal. her, ele-
gans, venu-
stus, deco-
rus fuit.

med of feeding together, and so participating each of others good or evill. This title Christ often giveth to his Spouse in this Song, as in Chap. 1. 15. & 2. 10. & 5. 2. &c.

The doubling of the word by an usuall Hebraisme, implyes, that shee was exceeding beautifull, and eminently glorious: it doth not onely set forth the vehemency of Christs affection and love towards his Spouse, but also the excellency of the Church it selfe, in that Christ can, as it were, find no words sufficient to expresse the same; her beauty being so great, both outward and inward, and also excellent, in both respects. This beauty and fairnesse of the Church hath been spoken of in Chap. 1. 15. therefore I shall speake but briefly of it, onely something to the present occasion of repetition.

The Church was called forth in the former Chapter to behold her Kings Coronation and Nuptials, and here is prevented of an Objection which secretly might be made on her part. The Objection is this, *Should I, one that am so poore and unworthy, come into the presence of such a stately King as Christ, who was typified by Solomon in respect of his glory?* This Objection Christ takes away in saying, *Behold thou art faire my love.*

Hence Observe,

That the Saints have a peerlesse beauty and purity, communicated to them from Jesus Christ. By the communication of this beauty and grace they are the *Jerusalem* (spoken of in Revel. 21. 2.) which comes downe from God out of Heaven, prepared as a Bride trimmed for her husband, and is free with her Children, Gal. 4. 26. into the communion whereof there can really enter *no uncleane thing, neither whatsoever wor-*
keth

kele abomination or lies, Revel. 21. 27. By this grace the Saints are Temples of the holy Spirit, the Tabernacle of God with men. The Spouse of Christ is faire, and the fairest; grace is a transcendent good, all the excellency of civility and morality is nothing in comparison of it. The Church is faire in her head Christ, being his mysticall body, and therefore is of a pure composition, made holy and gracious by the spirit of grace.

It will be Objected, *How can this be spoken of the Church here on Earth, in which condition even the best have great deformities?*

I Answer, The Lord looks upon his Church not onely as shee is, but also as he meanes to make her hereafter, even all glorious and beautifull. Againe, he looks on her, not onely as shee is in her selfe, but as shee is in himselfe, that is, washed and cleansed from all impurity, and also decked with his glory. Thus we have the praise in generall: now it followeth to consider of the praises in particular.

We have the praises of the Church in particular, by describing a peerlesse, or matchlesse woman, from the face to the breast part. He mentioneth seaven particulars, the Eyes, Haire, Teeth, Lips, Temples, Neck, and Breast. The number of seaven, is often the number of perfection, as appears, Rev. 5. 6. where Christ is likened to a Lamb with seaven hornes, and seaven eyes, which are the seaven spirits of God. Now by the seaven parts thus enumerated, are meant the manifold and plentifull measure of graces bestowed on the Saints, they being made partakers of all heavenly blessings in Christ, as the Apostle saith.

M m m

Hence

Hence Observe, *That the Saints have a plentiful and full supply of all grace and beauty from Christ.* This is that for which the Apostle giveth thanks in behalfe of the Corinthians, namely, *what they were indebted by Christ, and came behind in no gift, 1 Cor. 1. 5. 9.* We must know, that all the Saints are knit together by one Spirit, and doe make but one mysticall body in Christ, 1 Cor. 12. 13. So then, as there be in the naturall body of a man, diverse Members, which according to their severall gifts, have diverse functions and operations: so the holy Spirit ascribeth the like to the mysticall body, as the Apostle sheweth at large, 1 Cor. 12.

Secondly Observe, *That the Saints are beautifull in all parts.* Christ doth particularize every part, giving praise to every member. That beauty must needs be very rare and excellent, which ariseth from the comelinesse of all parts. If one part be comely, and another deformed, then there is no perfect beauty: but the Church justified and sanctified in Christ, is glorious in all parts.

Now followeth the particular parts. The first and second particulars doe lye in the following part of this verse. The first uttering the state of her Eyes, the second shewing the condition of her Locks.

Thou hast Doves eyes within thy Locks, &c.

Now the eyes of the Spouse are here commended, by comparing them to the eyes of Doves, which are chaste, full, cleare, beautifull to looke upon, and the like. Some understand by these eyes the Pastors and Teachers of the Church, because they are to give light to the whole body, through the Heavenly and pure

pure doctrine, and so it may be taken here, for in the old Testament the Prophets were called Seers. 1 Sam. 9. 9. but I rather take it in this place, that the eyes are the faith of the Saints, for by faith they looke up to the Lord, and behold things invisible, Heb. 11. 27. And they have by faith the eyes of their understanding opened, to know what is the hope of their calling, Ephel. 1. 18.

Hence Observe

that the eye of faith is very chaste, simple, and beautifull in the eyes of Christ. The Apostle tells us it is impossible to please God without faith, Heb. 11. 6. Therefore with the eye of faith he is much delighted. By faith the soule seeth him who is invisible, Heb. 11. 27. The eye of faith hath respect to the holy one of Israel, Isa. 17. 7. And it doth observe the wayes of the Lord, according to that saying in Prov. 23. 26. My Sonne, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my wayes. Who would not be glad to cast up such an eye to the Lord, as he may be delighted withall, as with an eye that is simple, chaste, and beautifull. The next clause followeth.

within thy Locks.

Some read it, from within, or, through thy Locks, which are so called in the Hebrew of binding, because womens locks are seemly and modestly bound up and covered. The covering of women was a signe of their subjection to their Husbands, 1 Cor. 11. It is also a signe of modesty and chastitie. Some would have the words signifie, that the locks of Haire hang downe so as the eyes doe appeare from within them. And others are of the mind that he saith, Beside thy

צמר
Inde nihil,
quod signifi-
cat, ligatus,
conjunctus:
Inde.

צמר
Per meta-
phoram at-
que id in pi-
bel tantum,
de pilis ca-
pitis &
barba.

locks: or as it were thy locks removed. However we take it, this is most certaine, that the Sponle is here commended from the manner of the attyre which chaste Virgins did weare about their Haire for modesty and comelineffe. Now in that the eye of faith is said to looke from within, or through the locks of modesty and chastity.

Hence Observe,

That faith is a very modest grace. Hence it is that God doth so often in Scripture attribute to it so much of justification and sanctification, because faith attributes so little to it selfe, and so much to Christ. Faith is (as I may call it) a modest grace, and will attribute nothing to it selfe: and hence, it is that the Lord declares so much affection to this grace of faith. Hence it is, the Apostle attributes our justification to faith. *Lest (saith he) any man should boast.* So much for the first particular towit the Eyes, the second followeth towit the Haire.

My children are as a flock of Goats that appeare from Amon Gilcad.

Some of the Hebrews expound the eyes to signifie the Prophets, which were called Seers, and the haire to be meant of the Nazarites which were not to cut their haire, *Numb. 6.*

Some understand by the eyes, pastors and Teachers, and by the haire the Congregation of Saints, and so take the haire for the multitude of Believers, as by haire the people of Israel was signified. *Ezekiel 5.*

But I rather understand both the eyes and the haire to be Ornaments of the whole Church, and of every particu-

particular member: *Haire* is an Ornament for the covering of the head, and it proceeds from the moisture of the Braine, and strength of nature: and hereby is signified the thoughts and counsell of the heart, the wisdom and counsell of Christ is signified by his *haire*, in Chap. 5. 11. And the Prophet Daniel makes mention of thoughts on his bed, and of visions of his head, Dan. 4. 5. & 7. 15. So the meaning according to this must be, that all the thoughts and purposes of the heart, guided and directed by the Lord are prosperous and glorious, like a flock of Goats that appear from Mount Gilead.

That appear from Mount Gilead.

Arius *Montanus* renders it, they shear, or cast their *haire*: the word *Galash*, is found but twice in Scripture, it seems to signifie to discover, or, reveale. Some interpret it *shake downe*, because the haire of these Goats depended and hung downe, from whence the comparison is taken.

*Qua depila-
tur se.
Arius
Mont.*

Mount Gilead was in the Tribe of Gad, 1 Chron. 6. 80. of the portion on this side *Jordan*, where Gad, Reuben, and halfe *Manasses* were seated: it is recorded in Num. 32. 1. to be a place of good pasture, and fit to feed Cattle, especially the flocks. The terme *Gilead* was first given by *Jacob*, Genes. 31. 47. It is derived of *Gal*, an heape or hill, such as was there made of stones, and of *Gad*, a witnesse, because that heape of stones was a witnesse betweene *Laban* and *Jacob*, concerning the Covenant of peace made betweene them.

If we understand by these words the Congregation of Saints, Then Observe,

That the assembling of Saints together is a glorious and beautifull.

beautifull thing in the eyes of Christ. Here the Saints are compared to the Goats feeding in a good pasture, whose haire hangs downe and smooth, &c. The Lord loves the Gates of Zion, more then all the dwellings of Iudah, as saith the Psalmist.

Secondly, if we understand it of the thoughts and purposes of the heart, Observe,

That those thoughts and purposes are beautifull, that are ordered by the Lord. When we receive our visions of the head from the Lord (which is here set forth by the haire) how glorious will those visions be? when a mans heart and cogitations are ordered by the Lord, there must needs be holy purposes, and glorious resolutions. David saith, Thou shalt guide me with thy counsell, and after bring me to glory. Psal. 73. 24. when the Lord shall direct and guide the mind, there all the thoughts and counsells of that soule must needs shine forth, and glister, like the haire of Goats, that are and smooth, by feeding in a good pasture, such was Mount Gilead was. It followeth,

VERS. 2.

Thy Teeth are like a flock of sheep, that are even shorn, which come up from the washing: whereas every one bears Twins, and none is barren among them.

CHRIST goes on in the commendation of his Spouse, and that by propounding some other particulars. In this Verse is introduced her Teeth, compared to a flock, to wit, of sheep, or Ewes, which is here to be understood, because it is not expressed in the Hebrew.

This flock unto which the Teeth of the Spouse are likened, is set forth in fowre particulars.

1. They are in good order like sheep even shorn, &c.
2. They are cleansed, which come up from the washing.
3. They are twinned, whereof every one beareth twins.
4. They be not barren, none is barren among them.

Thy Teeth are like a flock of Sheep, &c.

The first commendations of the teeth is, that they are like a flock of Sheep that are even shorn, that is, that are made even, or equall, of the same size, that stand in good order.

The Hebrew word *Ketsabath*, turned even, home, or good order, of *Ketsab*, to cut, to size or make small (as of one size the Cherubs were made in 1 Kings 6. 25.) it must signifie such an even-nesse, or good order, as followeth in things alike sized and carved. And here (as a Rabbin observeth) it signifies such a flock of animals, as are so orderly equall, as if one were cut or sized by another. This is the first praise of these mysticall teeth of the Church, that they are cut of equall height, or of equall bignesse, not one longer then another, which would be unseemly, and an hindrance to the well eating and chewing of her spirituall food. The second commendation followeth.

Which come up from the washing.

Sheep that are newly washed are white and cleane, being cleansed by water from filth and dust. As it is a commendation to the teeth to be orderly proportioned and seated, so to be cleare and white as Lambs going

קצב
Incidi placidit, succidit, decuravit.

going up from the washing. It was a part of Judah's blessing, that *his Teeth should be white with milk*, Gen. 49. 12. This terme of washing, whereby the Teeth are set out to be cleare, white, and beautilous, seems to be taken from the sacramentall washings of the Jewes, and may signifie the purity of that spirituall food, wherewith the Church is fed and nourished: or else the cleannesse of the soule that receives such spirituall food. The third commendation of the teeth followeth.

Whereof every one beare twins.

CON
Geminus
fuit, conge-
minatus est.

As fruttfull Ewes sometimes bring forth twins of equall bignesse, so the teeth are set in equall ranks one answerable to another. Some of the Rabbins read *Mathimoth* passively, to avoid tautologie in the next clause, thus, *Every one whereof is twinned*, or paired, that is, like as sheep going from the washing by couples, whereby is plainly set forth the equall correspondence of upper and lower teeth, each one orderly answering the other, as cut and sized by couples. This may denote the unity and fellowship of believers, that feed on the spirituall food of Jesus Christ. The Saints are fed and nourished together by the heavenly Man- na, even as Sheep goe up in couples from the washing. The fourth and last commendation of these teeth followeth.

And none is barren among them.

None is barren, or, as the word *Shacculah*, importeth none amongst them *aborts*, that is, brings forth before the time, or none is bereaved or robbed of the young, by mil- carrying, or the like. That which is barren is that which beareth not, as appears in *Isaiah 64. 1.*

Sing O barren thou that bearest not, &c. but here the word signifieth either miscarrying in the birth, or losse of that which is brought forth, by robberie, death or the like : so this denoteth the stedfastnesse of every tooth in his place, after it is brought forth : as if it were said, there is no tooth wanting in their order and place but even and stedfast, as sheep yeilding twins, and never miscarrying : so hath the Church her teeth.

Some understand these teeth, the pastours and teachers of the Church, because they were such as did *Cut and divide the word of truth aright unto the people*, as the Apostle saith : but I rather understand it of the Churches judging, discerning, and applying the word of God, to the comfort and nourishing of her owne soul, feeding by faith upon the promises of God. The spirituall food of the soule is Christ, and therefore is called, *The bread of life, that came downe from heaven*, Joh. 6. And the word is called the food of our soules, the Apostle willeth us, *As new borne babes to desire the sincere milke of the word*, 1 Pet. 2. 2. And Paul telleth the Corinthians, *That they were carnall, even babes in Christ, and that he gave them milke to drinke, and not strong meate*, 1 Cor. 3. Now by the teeth of the Church is meant that esteeme, discerning and applying of the word of God, that she hath for her owne comfort and nourishment.

Hence Observe.

That the Saints doe comfortably feed on Christ and his word, as on the heavenly food of their soules.

It is said in Psal. 22. 26. *The meeke shall eate and be satisfied*, and in Psal. 132. 15. *the meeke and needy shall have enough*. And Luke 1. 53. *God filleth the hungry with good things*. that is, they shall be satisfied and

Nnn

filled

filled with the good things of the Gospel. And thus wisdom inviteth the simple, *To eat of her bread, and drinke of her wine, Prov. 9. 5.* Thus Jesus tells the Jews, that he was the bread of life, *Joh. 6.* now it is upon Christ, and on the sweet promises, that the soule is nourished; and it is the believer only can feed upon this spirituall food, judging and discerning it aright. So much for the commendation of the Churches teeth. It followeth.

VERS. 3.

^{Lips}
Thy ~~teeth~~ are like a thred of scarlet, and thy speech is comely, thy Temples are like a piece of pomegranate within thy looks.

UNto the three former, now other two particulars of praise doe follow in this third verse, viz. the lips, and the Temples. Touching the first he saith.

Thy lips are like a thred of scarlet, and thy speech is comely.

The instruments of speech, and the chiefest grace of the countenance are the lips, and therefore the speech is commended by the instruments thereof, which are the lips.

Thy lips are like a thred of Scarlet, &c.

Here are two things commended in the lips.

First, They are small, in as much as they are resembled by a thred or line.

Secondly,

Secondly, They be red of colour, and therefore he mentioneth *scarlet*: a red colour of a double die.

Now if a Virgine be never so beautifull, if her speech be rude and unpleasant, it disgraceth all, therefore he addeth.

Thy speech is comely.

Comely, gracious, and to be desired. The Hebrew *נאה* Cupivit, significth *comely, beautifull, amiable, and to be desired.* concupivit, The Greeke translateth it *goodly, faire, beautifull.* affectavit, This comeliness of the Spouse is in her *sight, countenance and in Niph.* speech.

Now by the lips of the Church are commended her prayers and praises, her doctrines and thanksgivings, which are all uttered with her lips. The Spouse uttereth these not with swelling words of *vanitie*, or taught by humane wisdom, but by the Spirit of the Lord, which poureth grace and utterance into the soule. Now in that the Church is commended for her speech, and that from the beauty of her lips.

Hence Observe.

That the spirituall prayers and praises of the Church are gracious and comely.

Hence it is, that the very lips that are but the instruments of her speech, are commended for their beauty. The speech of man declareth what is in the heart, for Christ saith, *Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.* And a good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things, and an evill man out of the evill treasure of his heart, bringeth forth evill things. By nature, there is nothing in mans heart, but that which is corrupt and abominable, and so in all men, as the the Apostle saith, *The posson of Aspes is under their lips;*

Rom. 3. But by the operation of the holy Spirit, the hearts of the Saints are filled with faith and love, and then the speech is gracious. Such speech as proceedeth from a heart spiritualized, winneth love and liking. It was said of Christ, that he was *fairer then the Children of Adam*, *Grace was poured out of his lips*, *Psal. 45.* And the Apostle prayeth, *that a doore of utterance may be opened unto him.* Let a man be never so learned, if the doore of utterance be shut up, his speech shall profit little. It was falsely objected against *Paul*, as a reproach unto him, that he was *rude in speaking*, *2 Cor. 11. 6.* The truth is, he willingly avoided that painted kinde of eloquence, which carnall men, and such as have itching eares, doe commonly delight in, but he wanted no kinde of utterance which was fit for the preaching of the Gospell, to wit, the plaine evidence and demonstration of the Spirit.

So much for the praise of the Churches speech, set forth by the beauty of her lips. The next particular followeth.

Thy Temples are like a piece of pomegranate within thy locks.

He describeth another part of the countenance or face, *viz.* the temples of the head, speaking also of them according to the custome then used, women suffering their haire to hang about their temples, because it's said, *within thy locks.*

By *Temples* are meant, each of the temples of the head, and hereby may be meant the cheekes also, which are joynted to the temples: Now by the temples or cheekes, is commended the beauty and modesty of the Church.

The

The *Pomgranate* was of use in the old Tabernacle and Temple: *Aarons* Coat was hanged with *Pomegranates* and bells: Bells for the sound of doctrine and prayer, and pomegranate for restraining and healing the distempers, and diseases of the people. The *Pomgranate* when it is broken in pieces hath many graines and kernels in it, and also much juyce, whereby it is medicinable. These are commended for repressing the heat of the choler, and the malignity of fevers, & also for comforting and strengthening the stomach and bowels, keeping from fainting and the like. Now some do apply this to the Pastors of the Church, and the similitude of the *Pomgranate*, to denote the fruit and benefit that commeth by such. But I rather take it to be meant of the spirituall beautie of the Church; for, the *Pomgranate* being broken or cut, is of a glorious or ruddie colour, like unto *Roses*: So that the temples or cheekes of the Spouse is commended for beautie, that together with faire and white, there is a mixture of red.

Hence Observe.

That the Spouse of Christ is very beautifull and glorious.

The chiefeft grace of the countenance lying in the Temples, they are set forth by a comparison taken from the *Pomegranate*, and also her temples shine forth at her locks, beyond her haire, that so the beautie of the Spouse is so naturall unto her, that it needeth not vaine and wanton adorning: I doe not meane that her beautie is a naturall beautie, yet though it be supernatural it is made connaturall unto her: so that the Spouse need not seeke after worldly glorie to beautifie her spirituall beautie withall, for her glorie
farre

farr surpasseth all the glorie of the world; the glorie of the world is but an outside, painted excellency, there is no substantiall glorie in it; but the glorie and excellencie of the Spouse, is a reall and divine excellencie and beautie. The Spouse is beautifull in respect of her spirituall graces received from Christ. A deformed person, of a meane complexion and constitution, yet notwithstanding when he shall shew himselfe to be of a lovely, gracious, and sweet disposition, this breeds love and likeing towards such a one, though wee see nothing in the outward man to be lovely, so though the Saints are cloathed with no outward beautie, yet in respect of that spirituall wisdom, goodness, and love that is in them, they are very excellent and desirable.

So much for the commendation of the first particular.

The sixth followeth.

VERS. 4.

Thy neck is like to the Tower of David, builded for an armourie, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men.

THe eyes, the hair, the teeth, the lips, and temples have been spoken of. Now followeth a sixth particular to be considered in this verse, and that is the Churches neck, and this is done by a comparison, to certaine Tower of King Davids, ordained for an armourie purpose.

The

The neck of the Spoule is set forth by an excellent comparison, to wit, from *Dauids Tower*, *Thy neck is like the Tower of David, &c.*

The excellencie of this Tower is set forth, *Firſt*, For its defence, *builded for defence, or for armour*.

Secondly, In that it was a treasure, or houſe of ſtore for ammunition, in that it is ſaid, *Whereon there hang a thouſand bucklers, all ſhields of mighty men.*

Thy neck is like the Tower of David, &c.

It is the neck that joyneth the head and the body together: ſo faith joyneth Chriſt and his Members in one, whereby the Members become ſtrong and valiant, and therefore ſuly compared to the Tower of *David*, which he built at the end of his owne houſe upon *Mount Zion* for a defence, of which wee reade ſomewhat, in *Neb. 2. 19. 25.* And wee reade of *Dauid* ſpeaking of the ſtronghold of *Zion*, in *2 Sam. 5. 7.* and he built a Fort upon it verſe 9.

By the neck ſome underſtand the Paſtors of the Church, as before. But rather wee may underſtand it of the ſtrength of the Church, being joyned to Chriſt by faith, as the body is joyned to the head by the neck, for the neck it is named in Hebrew, *Iſanuaar* of ſtrength and firmneſſe: and the Tower is here named *Migdall*, which ſignifies a building great and high, as appears *Iſa. 2. 15.* The ſame word is uſed for a Pulpit, or Tower of wood, whereon the ſcribe ſtood, *Neb. 8. 4.* This denotes the magnanimitie, and courage of the Spoule, whiſt ſhe being by faith united unto Chriſt her head, ſhe is now able to encounter with all her ſpirituall adverſaries, by the ſtrength ſhe receiveth from her beloved.

Hence

תור
Collur, ſic
dictum quod
oneribus ar-
ctatur &
premitur.

גדל
Magnus fu-
it, vel iſa-
ctus eſt. In le

גדל
Turris, a
magnitudine
ſeu celsitudi-
ne.

Hence Observe.

That the Spouse being joyned by faith unto her head Christ, becomes magnanimous and valiant, to encounter with all her spiritual enemies.

The neck of the Spouse is like the Tower of David for strength and firmenesse; it is also like the neck of the horse clothed with Thunder, as Job speakes of, Job. 39. 19. The Apostle tels, that the weapons of (the Churches) warfare, are not carnal, but mighty through God, for the pulling downe of strong holds, &c. that is, the means, by which she fights against sinne, are not carnall, such as natural men have recourse unto, and gain authority withall, and do great things, as namely, riches, friends, honour, eloquence, or the like; but on the contrary, povertie, weaknesse, infamie, rudenesse, and plainnesse of speech; and foolishnesse in the worlds account: These weapons are made mighty through Gods power, who by infamie confoundeth honour; and by weaknesse confoundeth power, and confounds wisdom, by that the world accounts folly. In the originall it is *דָּוִדָּה הַגִּבּוֹרָה*, the great warriour, the Lord of Hosts, that manageth this warre for the Church. The Apostle in another place tels us, that wee are more then Conquerours, through him that loveth us; that is, through Christ, the Captaine of the Lords hoast: the neck of the Spouse being thus described: it followeth the end and use of this Tower, and that is double.

First, For defence.

Secondly, For hanging therein shields and targets.

Builted for an armory, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men.

Builted for an armorie, or defence. The Hebrew word
Talpijeth

Talpiſoth, is turned by ſome for *deſence*, of ſome other, for an *Armory* : of ſome others for *teaching* or *inſtructions*, namely of paſſengers. The difference ariſeth from the Hebrew word, it being of rare uſe, and I think not to be found in any other place of Scripture. But it ſeemeth to be derived of *Thalah*, to hang, and *piſoth*, two edged Swords. So we may conclude it to be a place where they did hang ſwords, and other weapons of warre, even all inſtruments to offend the enemy, and defend themſelves. It followeth.

Whereon there hang a thouſand Bucklers,

Whereon they hang, or are hanged, a thouſand Bucklers : צב
Chpeus
proſectio.
a certaine number is put for an uncertaine, as we find often in Scripture.

The Hebrew word *Hammagen*, ſignifies *protection*, or *deſence*. Thus by the Tower of *David* is the excellency of the Church ſet forth, it being marvailouſly well armed with armour and munition; yea, with armour that is poliſhed and prepared for moſt neceſſary uſes: the hanging up of theſe Bucklers and Shields, was a ſigne of victory and glory, as appears, *Ezek.* 27. 11. Theſe inſtruments of war are farther commended in that it is added,

All ſhields of mighty men.

The praiſe of theſe ſhields is, that they are meet for mighty and noble men, they are ſo good and excellent; they are no baſe things, nor ſuch as belong to meane men, but unto Nobles, and Captaines of Armies, and the like. The Hebrew word *Shiltei*, Tranſlated *Shields*, hath the ſignification of *power*, or *dominion*, as being uſed of great and mighty men. It alſo

שלט
Dominatus
eſt. poteſta-
tem habuit.
שליט
Dominator,
poteſta-
tem habens.

O o o

ſignifies

signifies a *Roller*, such as on as hath power in his own hand. *Of mighty men* or of strong, valiant men. The Hebrew word *Gibbor*, signifies a *Champion*, a *mighty man*, or, man of *valour*, and strength, and of superiority; these mighty men have reference to *David's* warriors, who stood faithfully with him, and did many heroicall actions, as appears, *1 Chron. 11. 10.* Now in that *David's* tower was thus furnished with all convenient weapons of war, both to offend the enemy, and also for defence of those with *David*, this did prefigure the mighty men of God, which by the shield of faith shall be able to do great things: for which purpose they have given them shields and bucklers to defend themselves. In the former part of the Verse, the strength and victory of the Spouse was set forth by her Neck, being compared to *David's* Tower, now here are her weapons described by which shee shall overcome.

Hence Observe,

That the Spouse is furnished with all spirituall weapons to withstand her enemies, and defend her selfe from wrong. The Spouse hath such spirituall weapons, as shee is able to defend her selfe, and discomfit all her enemies, as appears, *Ephes. 6. 11. 17.* where the Apostle exhorteth to put on the whole armour of God, that is, to be armed with all spirituall graces, and giveth a reason of his exhortation, *That yet may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devill, &c.* that is, that you may keep your station, not being put to flight, but to overcome and get victories over enemies, namely, to overcome the Devill in all his assaults, and to wrestle against principalities, rulers of darknesse, and spirituall wickednesses, &c. And that they might be ready for this great encounter

encounter, they were to have their *leins* girt about with truth, with Christ who is *them* and truth, John 14. 6. *Living on the Breast-plate of righteousness*, to keep the heart and Conscience whole. And *Abrein feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel*, being ready prepared to professe the truth of the glorious Gospel of Christ, *to take hold of the shield of faith*, by confidence in the power and goodnesse of God in Christ, *to take the helmet of salvation*, to wit, the hope of the mercy and redemption purchased by Christ: and lastly, *the sword of the spirit*, which will cut off all the temptations of Satan, and lusts of the flesh. And thus the faithfull soul is furnished with the compleat armour of God, whereby it is made victorious. So much for the commendations of the Churches Neck, being compared to the Tower of David, &c. it being the sixth particular. The seventh and last particular here commended in the Spouse is as followeth.

VERS. 5.

Thy two Breasts are like two young Roes that are twins, which feed among the Lilies.

Here the Breasts of the Church are introduced.

1. As beautifull and comely, in that they are likened to *young Roes that are twins*, to *young Roes* for pleasantnesse and smallnesse, and to *Twins* for equalizing, for in these things lies the beauty of the breast. The beauty of the Church is elsewhere set forth by her breasts, when it is said, *Thou art come to excellent Ornaments, thy Breasts are fashioned*, &c. Ezek. 16. 7.

2. The Breasts of the Spouse are set forth to be very usefull, in that it is said, *which feed among lilies.* Lilies prosper best in low and fruitfull places, so they that feed among lilies are in good pasture, and therefore are full of milke: so then the Breasts of the Church being full of milke and wholsome nourishment, her members *may suck and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations*, as the Prophet speaks, *Isa. 66. 11.*

Hence Observe,

That the Spouse of Christ doth feed her members with sweet and wholesome food. Hence it is said in *Cant. 5. 13* that the lips of Christ, are like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrhe. Such are all the doctrines of Christ, dispensed by the Spouse unto her members: she giveth them to suck of the sincere milke of the word, *1 Pet. 2. 2.* The Spouse will not feed her Children with humane traditions, and inventions of men, but with pure, divine truths, such as she hath received from Christ her head. In the Tabernacle was always the Candle burning, the Table of perfume senting, and the Shew-bread standing before the Priest, to intimate, that in the Church, which is Gods house, should alwayes be the light of Christ and his truth, and the bread of life dispensed unto the Saints. So much of the particulars, whereby Christ hath made good his former praise, delivered in that generally, *Behold thou art faire.*

It followeth.

VERS.

VERS. 6.

*Untill the day breake, and the shadows flee away, I will
get me to the mountains of myrrhe, and to the hill
of frankincense.*

Christ having in the former five verses, set out the
praise of the Spouse.

First, In that generall speech, *Thou art faire,* And
Secondly, In particular proofes drawne from the
parts and effects of her nature : he now commeth to
give an answer to a former request, which she had
made before in chap. 2. 17. There she desired him to
draw neere unto her, and let her enjoy communion
with him, though it were a time of darknesse and
shadows : here he answereth, *Untill the day breake, &c.
I will goe into the mountains of myrrhe, &c.*

In which answer Observe.

First, The time specified, *Untill the day breake, &c.*

Secondly, The place of Christs appearing, *I will
get me to the mountains of myrrhe, &c.*

Untill the day breake, and shadows flee away.

By the dawning of the day, is meant the breaking
forth of light and glorie, when Christ shall gloriously
discover himselfe to be the Sonne of righteousness in
his brightnesse.

By the shadows, as it respects the Jewish Church,
are meant all the shadows of Mosaicall ceremonies and
types : but as it respects the Church in generall, it is
meant of all ignorances, infirmities, and troubles what-
soever. For the words see them expounded at large
before

before in Chap. 2. 17. there being only this difference betweene this and that place, that there the Church desireth a sweet communion with Christ during the time of these shadows and darknesse she was under: and here Christ promiseth her his presence, so long as she should remaine in that condition. I shall not stand now to open, what these shadows are, having spoken of them already, in chap. 2. 17. But to proceed to the promise of Christ, which is as followeth.

I will get me to the mountaines of myrrhe, and to the hill of frankincense.

What may be that mountain, and this hill? according to the letter, it must be such a mountain as hath his name of myrr, and such an hil as hath his denomination from incense, either because there it was gathered, or offered unto God; what mountaine in *Israel* brought forth myrrhe, is hardly knowne, except it were *Moriah*, which at first might be so called of the Hebrew word *Mor*, in english *myr*, in Greeke *Myrrhe*. What hill is that that brought forth incense or frankincense, is evident from many places, and even from this text, where the word translated incense, is in the original *Lebonah*, which may be termed *Lebanon*: so *Moriah* and *Lebanon*, may be the places here meant, according to the letter.

But according to the mysterie, *Moriah* may be both the one and the other, because the Temple was builded on *Moriah*, 2 *Chron.* 3. 1. and there myrrhe and incense were dayly offered up to the Lord. It was on this mountaine, that *Abraham* offered up his Sonne *Isaac* for a sacrifice, for it was said, *In the mountain of the Lord, it shall be seene*, *Gen.* 22. 2. 14.

Now

Now if we take the words for the Hitterall Temple of Solomon, with all the mysticall adjuncts of divine service, namely, from the odours dayly burned there, then we may understand *Messiahs* speech better in more words thus: *O my beloved Sponse, thou lonigest to see my appearance in the flesh: satisfie thy selfe for a season, for in the fullnesse of time thou shalt see me, but till a certaine time determined of my Father, that must not be. In the meane time I will walke under types and shadows, under Mosaicall ceremonies, and spirituallly make my residence at Jerusalem, where sweet odours are continually burned, and offered up unto me.*

Againe, If wee take it for the Spirituall Temple, to wit, the Saints under the new-Testament, who are the house of God and Temple of his Spirit: then Christs speech may be thus resolved: *Sweet Sponse, thou art willing to loose my bodily presence, for it is appointed of my Father, that I goe unto him, and ye shall see me no more, but the comforter shall come, and teach you all things, bring all things to your remembrance, and lead you into all truth: and though I am absent in respect of my humane nature, yet I will alwayes be present in my divine nature.*

Thus, take the speech of *Messiah* to be delivered unto the ancient Church before Christ, longing after his incarnation; or take it to be his speech to the Church under the Gospel since the assumption of our flesh, they yeild us this observation.

That Christ doth spirituallly appeare unto his people, under every dispensation of his unto them.

Christ was seen spirituallly, by his people of old under the lowest dispensation, under legall types and shadows, under oblations and sacrifices of burnt offerings. The Lord appeared to the *Israelites* in the Tabernacle

in

in the Wildernesse, which was made by the direction of God given to *Moses*. This was a type.

First of Christ, who is said to pitch his Tabernacle among us, *Joh. 1. 14.*

And Secondly, The Church is called the Tabernacle of God, *Revel. 21. 3.* The Lord went out of his Tabernacle into the Temple, which was built according to the direction of God given to *Solomon*. This was a type of Christs body, as appeares by his owne words, *destroy this Temple, &c.* and also the Church is called *The Temple of the Lord, Ephes. 2. 21.* After this the Lord appeared in the ministrie of *John Baptist*, who was Christs forerunner to prepare the way, he came baptising with water, which baptism had a neer resemblance to the legall washings under his Law. But after all this God appeares in his Sonne, in whom all fulnesse was, as appeares, *Col. 2. 9.* Christ was full of the divine annointings of the Father. Now when Christ was to goe out of the world, he makes a supply of his corporall absence, by returne of his Spirit, and therefore he saith, *I will not leave you comfortlesse, I wil come to you. When the world seeth me not, yet see me.* This noteth the presence of Christ by his Spirit with his Church: but there is more then a presence, there is an inhabitation. *At that time you shall know, that I am in the Father, and you in me, and I in you, Joh. 14. 18. 20.* This is the most glorious manifestation of Christ, namely, in the spirituall discoveries of himselfe unto his Saints. I intend not to enlarge on these things but proceed to the next words.

VERS. 7.

Thou art all faire my love, there is no spot in thee.

IN these words wee have another commendation of the Churches beautie: so that though Christ did not name all particular parts of his Spouse, to give them their severall commendation, as he did in divers, yet he ascribeth a full perfection of beautie unto them all when he saith, *Thou art all faire, &c.*

The beautie of the Church is described.

First, By the adjunct, that it is, whole and perfect, *Thou art all faire my love.*

Secondly, By the contratie: *There is no spot in thee.*

Thou art all faire, &c.

The Spouse was called *faire*, before in chap. 1. 15. and in chap. 4. 1. That which is added here is that Christ saith, she is *all faire*, that is, her beautie is perfect, and compleat. And it also signifies she is faire in every part. Christ commended her in severall Members, and therefore instead of naming the rest, he sums up all in one word saying, *Thou art all faire, &c.* And he addeth.

There is no spot in thee.

The word translated *spot*, is *mun*, from whence the Greeke *μύμη*, which signifieth any blemish in the bodie, as blinde, lame, or deformed in any limb or part, *Levit. 21. 17. 18.* And it is applied to the blemishes of the soule, namely, those vices and sinnes, that Christ

is said to purge his people from, as in Revel. 1. 10. *He hath loved us and washed us from our sins in his owne blood.* Christ himselfe is called the Lamb, 1 Pet. 1. 19. *that is, without spot.* The word properly signifies one without fault or blemish, This commendation Christ gives the Church *she is not culpable or blame worthy such* that perfect beautie, that Christ doth cloath his Spouse withall, that he sees no deformitie at all in her.

Hence Observe.

That Christ doth cloath his Spouse with perfect beautie.

The Church is made beautifull with the cloathing of Gods owne righteousnesse, and that must needs be compleat beautie: Hence it is, that those that stand with the Lamb on Mount Zion, are said to be without blemish before the Throne of God, Revel. 14. 1. 5. And thus the Apostle saith, that Christ gave himselfe for his Church, that he might sanctifie it, and cleanse it by washing of water through the word: that he might make it unto himselfe a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing: but that it should be holie without blame Ephe. 5. 25, 26. By these spots here mentioned, we may understand them of any sinfull worke, or greater sort of sinnes, and by wrinkle, lesser sinnes, and those infirmities, which are some blemish to our spirituall beautie: So that Christ cleaneeth his people from all sinne, according as it is said, in 1 John 1. 7. Thus Christ is said to have reconciled his people unto God, through faith, in the bodie of his flesh, that he might present them holie, and without blemish, and unreprouable in his sight, Col. 1. 21, 22. But here it will be said, how agreeth this with her owne speech in the first Chapter, where she saith, *I am black, &c.* and that she was sun burnt? And how doth it agree with all

those

those places of Scripture, which testifie so plainly, that
 all the Saints while they live here, be full of spots and
 deformities? The answer is, That the Spouse is not
 to be considered, as she is in her selfe, after the flesh,
 and corrupted nature: but as she stands perfectly justi-
 fied in her head Christ: So that though the Spouse
 be not freed from personall imperfection, arising from
 the flesh; yet as she stands clothed with the righte-
 ousness of God, made out to her through Christ; so
 she is perfectly righteous and holy, and without spot
 or wrinkle in Christs sight.

VERS. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14

Come with me from Lebanon (my Spouse) with me from Le-
 banon: looke from the top of Amana, from the top of
 Shever, and Hermon from the Lions den, from the moun-
 tains of the Leopards.

Thou hast ravished my heart, my Sister, my Spouse, thou
 hast ravished my heart, with one of thine eyes, with one
 chaine of thy neck.

How sweet is thy love, my Sister, my Spouse! how much bet-
 ter is thy love then wine! and the smell of thine ointments
 then all spices!

Thy lips, O my Spouse, drop as the honey-comb, honey and
 milke are under thy tongue, and the smell of thy garments
 is like the smell of Lebanon.

A garden inclosed is my Sister, my Spouse: a spring shut up,
 a fountaine sealed.

Thy plants are an Orchard of Pomegranates, with pleasant
 fruits, Camphire, with Spikenard.

Spikenard and Saffron, Calamus and Cinnamon, with all the Trees of frankincense, myrror, and aloes, with all the chiefe Spices.

ALl these verses that I have read unto you, are the words of Christ, wherein he goes on in commending and comforting his beloved Spouse. Christ having in the former verses of the Chapter commended his Spouse in her severall Members, concluding with a generall praise of her perfect beautie, now he calleth her to a higher pitch of glorie and dignitie, in this eighth verse. And in these following verses, he declares how deeply he stands affected towards his Church.

VERS. 8.

Come with me from Lebanon, my Spouse, &c.

In this Verse Observe.

First, the sweet terme of relation, given by Christ unto his Church, calling her by the name of *Spouse, My Spouse, &c.*

Secondly, his gracious invitation, or calling of her unto himselfe.

First, He calls her from all quarters of the World, in these words, *Come with me from Lebanon, from Aman, Shenir, and Hermon.*

Secondly, He calls her from danger, from the company of wicked men, by adding, and from *the Den of Lions, and the hill of Leopards.*

My Spouse, &c.

This is the first time that Christ calleth his Church by the name of *Spouse*, which yet notwithstanding sundrie

many times after he giveth her the same title, as vers. 9, 10, 11, 12. of this Chapter, also Chap. 5. 1. The Spouse or Bride, is named in Hebrew *Callah*, of *Callal*, to perfect, from the perfection of her attire, Ornaments, such as, as appears, Jer. 2. 32. Christ having before declared his Church to be all faire, and without spot, having washed her, and cleansed her, and presented her glorious unto himselfe: now he calls her by the name of Spouse.

Heere Observe,

That the Church in respect of her spirituall beauty, is made the Spouse of Christ. Shee is called his glorious Spouse, Ephel. 5. 26. And the Bride, the Lambs wife, who is prepared as a Bride adorned for her husband, Rev. 19. 2. 9.

Now followeth his invitation.

Come with me from Lebanon, &c.

These words import not onely a bare invitation, but also a promise, we may read, *Thou shalt come with me, &c.* חבוא *with me*, to wit, myself. Christ doth assure his Spouse of his continual presence, and also that he wil wholly gather it, that none of his that come unto him, shall eyther be taken out of his hand, or perish, &c. as it is in John 17. 12.

From Lebanon. He meaneth thereby a most pleasant and most fruitfull place, where were many sweet tall, and excellent Cedar Trees, as appears, Song 3. 9. It was a Mountaine bordering on the North part of the Land of Canaan, possessed of old by the Hivites, which are said to dwell thereon, Judg. 3. 3. This Mountaine in comparison to other places was very fruitfull, was called a Forrest or Wildernesse, Isa. 29.

170 But, in respect of the goodly Cedar, that groweth there, it is used to signify glorious things, as appears Chap. 3. 9. & Dent. 3. 25. So the meaning is here, that none of these things should hinder the Spouse from coming to Christ, for to enjoy communion with him.

Come with me, or, Thou shalt come with me from Lebanon. These words are doubled, both for the vehemency of him that speaketh, as also for the more certainty of the thing spoken: so that no let or impediment whatsoever should hinder the Spouse from the enjoyment of Christs continuall presence and sweet communion. He addeth,

Looke from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir, and Hermon, &c.

חשורי
מראש

Looke, or thou shalt looke: from the top, or, from the head of Amana. Some thinke this to be a Mountaine in that part of Syria, that bordered upon the Land of Israel. Some of the Rabbins hold it to be a Mountaine in the borders of Iury, lying on the North side thereof. But it is most likely to be meant the Mountaine of Syria, the Valley and River in it was likewise called *Ammoth*, and *Abanah*, in 2 Kings 5. 12. *Highloweth.*

From the top of Shenir and Hermon.

Both these seemeth to be meant of one Mountaine. This *Hermon* was a goodly Mountaine, possessed of Og King of Bashan, from whom it was taken by the Israelites: and the Amorites called it *Shenir*, the *Sidonians*, *Shirion*, as appears, *Dent. 3. 9.* Wherefore it may be thought strange that *Solomon* in this place maketh them

them diverse. For the clearing whereof this would be
observed that at the first one and the self same thing
might be cal'd by many names, as in respect of diverse
people dwelling nigh unto the same, and the severall
properties of their tongues which they used: and yet
withstanding in procelle of time, and multitudes
of people increasing, some of those names applyed to
the whole, might be attributed to some part of it. By
this the Spirit would have us understand, that Christ
should gather his people from all the Quarters of the
world, and they should behold his glory. Now he
willeth, that they should not onely be gathered, but
should be safely brought home to Christ through all
dangers, as appears in the next words.

*And from the Lyons Den, from the Mountaines of
the Leopards.*

These places seeme, as most commonly Moun-
taines and such solitary places, to abound with wild
and hurtfull beasts, by which is denoted, that Christ
would set his Spouse free from dangers. The effect
of the words may import thus much, that Christ pro-
mitteth to bring his Spouse out of *Liban*, and to ef-
fect this much for her, that from the top of most high
Mountaines she should behold her proud enemies
subverted under her feet. And here we must consider
that in all these allusions to the Land of promise, it is
taken from those places, by which the *Israelites* first
entered into the same, and from whence they might
behold that goodly Country. *Sion* and *Ther*
were high Mountaines on the farther side of *Jordan*,
from whence they might behold the Land of promise.
Lebanon, as also *Amalek*, as it should seeme, were on
this

"this side *Jordan*, but yet in the borders of the Land of *Canaan* towards the North. Now we must understand that there is a mysticall Interpretation of these words, then forasmuch as in all this Song *Lebanon* is taken for a place of pleasure and fruitfulness: and on the other side the *Amorites* and other enemies dwell in *Hermon*, and *Shenir*; the holy Spirit doth hint out unto us under these shadows, that as from *Lebanon* and other Mountaines Scituated on the borders of the Land of promise, they did behold the whole Country, and at last came into the promised Land: so when they come unto Christ they should have a glorious view of the divine and heavenly mysteries of God in Christ; from the attainment whereof, neither the pleasures of *Lebanon*, nor the Dens of Lyons and wild Beasts, should hinder them, but in the midst of dangers and fears, they should have free access thereunto. The words being thus explained, let us from hence Observe.

First, That Christ doth gather his people from all parts of the World to behold his glory. This is here figured out unto us, that as the Lord did promise to shew his people the Land of Promise, so he would draw his Spouse from all places of the world unto himselfe, and discover his glory unto her. However the Spouse may be scattered among the Nations of the world, yet he will take her unto himselfe; for he will gather his elect from the four winds; and from the uttermost parts of the Earth. Thus the Lord promisseth to bring the seed of his Spouse from the East, and gather it from the West: And he will say to the North give up, and to the South keep not back: bring my Sonnes from farre, and my Daughters from the end of the Earth, Isa. 43. 5, 6. And it

is said in Isa. 45. 22. *Looke unto me, and be see saved all the ends of the Earth.*

Secondly Observe,

That Christ doth gather his Saints to himselfe in the midst of persecutions and dangers. And therefore it is he saith, *From the Den of Lions; and from the Mountaines of Leopards.* For the Spouse dwelleth here in the world among cruell and savage beasts, which would utterly destroy her: but Christ preserveth her in the midst of feares and dangers, and saith, *thou shalt come with him from among them that would devour her.* And hence it is said, *The Lord draweth his out of great tribulation,* Rev. 7. 14. When the Spouse is in great danger as David, when he said, *My soule is among Lyons,* Psal. 57. 4. then Christ delivers her from the perill she is under. This is the dignity that Christ brings his people unto, namely, to come to him, to behold his glory from all parts of the world, and to be safe in their passage unto him. It followeth,

VER 3. 9.

Thou hast ravished my heart my Sister, my Spouse, thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one Chaine of thy Necke.

IN this verse, as also in those that follow, is set down and declared how deeply Christ stands affected towards his Spouse, and how much his heart is taken with her.

Christ's singular love to his Church, which he declares with a marvellous earnest affection, is set forth with grave and weighty exclamations.

1. By that sympathy of like mind and affection, which is betwene them, from that strong impression which her beauty had made upon him, whereby shee had (as it were) wounded and pierced his heart, in these words; *Thou hast ravished my heart*, &c. which expression is doubled, to shew the vehemency of his affection towards her.

2. His affection is declared by shewing how access is unto him, for which in nature he hindereth himselfe to love her.

First, by the bond of consanguinity, shee is his sister.

Secondly, by the bond of conjugall amity, shee is his spouse.

3. His affection is expressed by the commendable things which he saw in her, which made him love and ground his affection, the comeliness of her person, and the Ornament wherewith shee was decked.

1. Her beauty is described, *With one of thine eyes*.

2. Her Ornaments set forth, by adding, *With thine Chaine of thy Neck*.

Thou hast ravished my heart, thou hast ravished my heart.

Such repetitions as these imply in the Hebrew phrase a superlative excellency, and hereby is set forth how exceedingly Christs heart and affection were overcome with the love of his Spouse. Is it the manner of the Hebrews to repeat the same thing againe, in prayer, to manifest the zeale of him that prayeth, as where Christ saith, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* Matth. 26. And in Prophecy, to shew the certainty of performance of that which is revealed. In simple narrations the same words are repeated.

poised to confesse and assure mens hearts that the matter is true.

This phrase doth admit of diverse readings. Some read it, *Thou hast snatched or taken away my heart*, as it were, by violence and force. Others read thus, *Thou hast pierced or wounded my heart*. The Chaldee (saith Master Ainsworth) Expoundeth it, *Thy love is fixed in the Talle of my heart*. The Hebrew is but one word, and used twice in this place, and signifieth a most ravishing and delightfull drawing of the heart by love. I cannot expresse it neerer the Originall word, then to say, *Thou hast unhearted me*, that is in effect thus, *Thou hast wounded, or, taken away my heart from me*, thou hast even ravished and overcome me with thy love. Christ speaketh here to his Spouse as a man overcome with love, for it doth exceedingly set forth the passion of love when the Bridegroom shall tell his Bride that shee hath gotten away his heart. Hereby appeareth the super-abounding love of Christ towards his Spouse, in that there be not any words sufficient fully to expresse the same.

Hence Observe,

That Christs heart and affections are exceedingly taken with his people. Hence it is said that the Lord will rejoice over his people as the Bridegroom rejoiceth over the Bride. Isa. 62. 5. Like unto this is that where the Lord saith in Zeph. 3. 17. The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty, he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy, he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing. That is, he will rest well pleased, and much delighted in his love, and he will rejoyce over his Spouse with the highest pitch of joy; yea, he will rejoyce with singing, which is the highest expression of joy and de-

לִבְהָרִי
In pibil: In-
cordiafime.
Et rapisti
animum me-
um, vel, ita-
xisti ani-
mum meum.

light: So then, the heart of Christ being thus taken, is meant his exceeding love whereby he rejoyceth over his people, according as it is said in *Isa. 43. 4.* Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee, &c.

Thus Christ hath declared how neer and deare his Spouse is unto him, by the sympathy of like mind and affection, which is betweene him and his Church. Now it followeth, that he shews how neerly they are related one to the other, by the band and consanguinity, and conjugall amity.

My Sister, my Spouse.

My Sister, so Christ calleth his Church out of that respect and love he bears unto her. We are told in *Heb. 2. 11.* That both he that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified, are all of one, for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren. This tearme needs no explanation, but let us observe hence.

That Christ stands neerly related his people, as a Brother, &c. This relation of brotherhood betweene Christ and his people, is two-fold.

1. By the right of nature, as the Apostle saith, Forasmuch as the Children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also likewise tooke part with them, that he might destroy through death him that had the power of death, which is the Devill; for he in no sort tooke on him the nature of Angels, but he tooke the seed of Abraham, wherefore it became him in all things to be made like his Brethren, *Heb. 2. 14. 16.* So that Christ tooke our nature, and was cloathed with our flesh, to be made like unto us his brethren, and in the same flesh.

The second right is of adoption; for it is said, when

the fulnesse of time came, God sent his sonne, made of a woman, and made under the Law, that he might redeeme them that were under the Law, that wee might receive the adoption of Sonnes, Gal. 4. 45. And againe the Apostle saith, As many are led by the Spirit of God, are sons of God Ro. 8. 14. whence the Apostle reasons thus, If wee be Children, we are also heires annexed with Christ, Rom. 8. 17. So that the Saints lay claime to the riches and treasures of glorie, by right of adoption, and brother-hood with Christ.

Thus much for the band of consanguinitie. That of conjugall amitie followeth.

My Spouse.

Christ calleth his Church, *Spouse*, named in Hebrew *Callath*, of the perfection of her attyre and ornaments, as was intimated in verse 7. of this Chap. The *Spouse* is one, that is already married unto her husband: so that this title of Spouse, shews how the Church is to Christ. The *Spouse* is most deare to her husband (saith Solomon) for she is the crowne of his head, Prov. 12.

Hence Observe.

That the Church is the Spouse of Christ.

Hence, it is that she is called the *bride*, the *Lamb's wife*, who is prepared as a bride adorned for her husband, Revel. 21. 2. 9. And the Lord saith, I have married thee to my selfe, in righteousness, judgement, mercie and compassion, Hos. 2. 19. Wee are not to take the words in a carnall sense, but that God hath framed words to our capacitie only, for what termes could be more effectuell to expresse his love, then the names of Sister and Spouse?

The last thing in this verse, wherewith Christ was
so

so much taken in his affections with his Spouse, is by the commendable things which he saw in her, which made him so to fix and ground his affection.

First, The comeliness of her person.

Secondly, The ornaments wherewith she is decked.

With one of thine eye, and the chaine of thy neck.

With one of thine eye, or, one looke from thine eye.
The eyes of the Spouse were commended in verse 4 where they were likned to Doves eyes, for being *pure, chaste, pure*: by this is meant the chaste eye of faith, whereby the Saints looke up to Christ.

Hence Observe.

That Christ is much taken with the least looke of faith from his saints.

For Christs beholding of the faith of the Spouse, maketh such deep impressions in him of her *idea* and forme of beautie, that his affection is so rooted in his heart, that it cannot be removed nor concealed. It is added.

And the chaine of thy neck. The chaine of the neck is an ornament added to naturall beautie: and doth often signifie Gods Laws and Ordinances, as appears *Pro. 10. 9.* and also signifies the grace of the Spirit and fruits of faith, as was opened at large in chap. 1. 10. So he meaneth by the chaine of the neck, the ornaments of the Spirit, and of grace, which is the Law of Christ in the inner man.

Hence Observe.

That it is Christs owne grace in the soule, that he is much affected with in his saints.

God cannot delight in any thing, besides himselfe, and therefore it is, the manifestation of himselfe in his
Saints

Saints, that draweth ſuch high expreſſions of love and delight in him towards them. Therefore he indueth his Church with gifts of his owne ſpirit, to make her ſeeme beautifull, where he ſaith, *I have gathered thee with bordered worke, ſhod thee with badgers ſkins, girded thee with fine linnen, covered thee with ſilke, decked thee with ornaments, put bracelets on thy hands, and a chaine up- on thy necke, Ezek. 16. 10.* By theſe outward ornaments we mean the inward graces of the Spirit, which proceed from God, and not from the Spouſe : according as a Father ſaith, if the good things which be in us, are the gifts of God, God crowneth thoſe good things not as ours, but as his owne. And againe he ſaith, God crowneth his owne gifts, not thy deſervings. And therefore wee have the Prophet ſaying, *Thy name is ſpread among the Heathen for thy beautie, for it was per- ſect through my beautie, which I had ſet upon thee, ſaith the Lord, Ezek. 16. 14.*

*Si ergo do-
na dei ſint
bona meri-
ta, non deus
coronat me-
rita tua tan-
quam tua, ſed tanquam
dona ſua, Auguſt. de
gratia et
lib. arbit.
cap. 7. Dona
ſua coronat
deus, non
merita tua.
cap. 6.*

Laſtly, in that he ſaith with one eye and one chaine. Obſerve, That where Chriſt ſeeth the leaſt grace, he is much taken with it. It is, as if Chriſt had ſaid, if I ſee but one of thine eyes, to wit, one ſingle, chaſt, pure looke of ſmiles, and if I ſee but one chaine, to wit, one ſpirituall diſcoverie of my ſelfe, it is enough for ever to take up my heart and affections.

Now Chriſt proceedeth to ſhew the ground of his deep affection towards his Spouſe, and that by a diſco- verie of the properties of her beautie and goodneſſe, all which is expreſſed with a vehement and paſſionate crying out, and repetition of the former title, ſaying,

VER. S. 10.

How faire is thy love, my Sister, my Spouse ! how much better is thy love then wine ! and the smel of thine ointments then all spices.

IN this verse, Christ sheweth how delightfome and pleasant the love of his Spouse is unto him : he doth expresse it by way of admiration, *how faire is thy love ! &c.*

The love of the Spouse is set forth,

First, By the fairenesse of it, *How faire is thy love, &c.*

Secondly, By the strength, sweetnesse, cheerefulness, in that it is preferred above wine : *How much better is thy love then wine !*

Secondly, the divine anointings of the Spouse is commended, in that the graces of the spirit in her, are set forth by fragrant and odoriferous ointment : *And the smel of thine ointments then all spices.*

How faire is thy love, my Sister, my Spouse !

Sister, and *Spouse*, are the same titles, as we had in verſe 9. and carrie the same affection as there.

How faire, or *how beautifull*, *how gracious are thy loves !* Her love is faire, because in her there is no blemish, as was before delivered. It is, as if Christ should say, how glorious and excellent, yea, and full of delight are these sound affections, that thou carriest towards me, by which also I am moved, even to love thee againe : and he speaketh of them in the plural number, not only thereby to expresse the multitude of them, but the excellency also.

Or, we may understand by *loves*, not onely those gracious affections of the Spouse, but also her holy actions, which proceed from love, as the fruits thereof, as faith, hope, and the like: these are also goodly and faire in the eyes of Christ.

Hence Observe,

That the gracious affection of love, with all the fruits flowing from them, are gracious and lovely in Christs sight. Hence it is, that Christ commendeth her love, even to admiration, saying, *How faire is thy love, &c.* The Spouse being washed and cleansed by Christ, and cloathed with his beauty, whereby she became fair in his sight, without spot or wrinkle, all her affections of love and delight towards Christ, must needs be very acceptable.

It followeth.

How much better is thy love then wine!

In the former clause, as the love of the Spouse was set forth, by its fairnesse and beauty; so here for its fragrancy and sweetnesse, in that it is preferred before wine.

How much better; or, how good are thy loves, better then wine; that is, they are better and more delightful by much, then the most fragrant wine. It was noted in Chapter 1. 2. that wine is put for all dainty things in a Banquet, where the Church speaking of Christs love, did manifest that his love was exceeding pleasant, sweet and comfortable: here Christ returns the like expression concerning the love of his Spouse towards him, rendering as it were like for like, which is an usuall manner among lovers, and particularly in their words and speeches one of them unto another.

R r r

Here-

מה טוב
Quam boni
sunt. Arius
Mont.

Hereby then is set forth unto us, how marvellous acceptable and well pleasing the love of the Spouse is unto Christ, the heavenly bridegroom.

Hence Observe,

That Christ is exceedingly delighted and wel-pleased with the fruits and graces of his owne Spirit in his Saints.

Christ cannot but delight in his owne image and grace: hence it is said, that God *delighteth* in his Spouse, and rejoyleth over her, *as a Bridegroom rejoyleth over his Bride*, Isa. 62. 4, 5. There is nothing more pleasant and refreshing to the nature of man, then sweet and fragrant wine: no more is any thing more delightfull and acceptable to Christ, then the graces of his owne Spirit in the Saints. Now followeth the high commendations of the Spouse, in respect of her divine anointings by the Spirit.

And the smell of hine ointments then all spices!

By the smell of the Spouses ointments, is meant, the sweet and pleasant smell of such graces, as she hath received from Christ.

The pleasantnesse that is in ointments, we may see in Prov. 27. 9. And Psal. 133. 2. Under these earthly things, understanding the Spiritual graces before mentioned, is set forth the excellency of the divine anointings of the Spirit in the Spouse, for it is usuall in the Scriptures, by oyle, ointment, anointing, &c. to understand the graces, and anointings of the Spirit in the Saints. See Psal. 89. 20. also 45. 7. and 1 Job. 2. 26. 27. we may remember, that the Spouse did commend Christs ointments, for the sweet savour of them in Song. 1. 3. Here Christ returns the same conditions unto the Spouse in respect of her anointings. And he addeth...

Then

Then all spices, or before all spices, viz. though they be never so costly and deare, because there is no spice without some dust: as gold cannot be tryed; so spice cannot be brayed in the mortar without some losse. The anointing oyle, of which we read of, in *Exod.* 30. 23. was made of sweet smelling spices; and with such, sometime women were purified, *Esth.* 2. 12. and the dead imbalmed, *2 Chron.* 16. 14. They were meet presents for Kings, as appeares, *2 Chron.* 9. 1. 9. Now all earthly ointments were confectioned, and made sweet smelling and costly spices; but here it is meant of divine and heavenly ointments of the Spirit.

Hence Observe.

That the divine anointings of the Spouse is full suavity and sweetnesse.

Christ doth here preferre the annointings of the spirit in his Spouse, before any earthly confection whatsoever, though made of never so sweet and costly spices. What is more pleasing to the smel, then sweet ointments of an exquisite composition? such and much more is the Spirit and its graces in the Saints unto Christ.

The judgement that Christ hath of the spirituall anointing of his Spouse, is, that it farre excelleth all delightfull and sweet smelling odours in the world, synecdochically signified by ointment of sweet spices, one pleasant species or kind for all the rest. Christ proceedeth in the commendations of his Spouse, saying.

VERS. 11.

Thy lips, O my Spouse, drop as the honey-combe : hony and milke are under thy tongue, and the smel of thy garments is like the smel of Lebanon.

Here are in this verse two things highly prayed in the Spouse.

First, Her speech.

Secondly, Her sweet savour.

Her speech is compared.

First, To the sweet droppings that distill from the honey-combs, in these words, *Thy lips drop as the honey-combs.*

Secondly, Her speech is not only most sweet, but wholsome and nourishing; which is expressed in these words, *Hony and milke are under thy tongue.*

Lastly, The sweet savour of the Spouse is commended, in that it is added, *And the smell of thy garments is like the smel of Lebanon.*

Thy lips drop as the honey-combe, &c.

By the lips of the Spouse, is meant her speech, both private and publique, whereby shee uttereth most sweet and delightfull words, to wit, of faith and holinesse : such words of preaching his doctrines, extolling his praises are as pleasing to Christs cares, as the honey-comb it selfe is pleasant to the tast. And he putterh the lips which are some of the instruments wherewith a naturall voice is framed, and words are uttered, for the speech it selfe, or things spoken. By this similitude of the honey-combe, the word of God is praised, in *Psal. 19. 10.* where it is said, that the

the judgements of the Lord are sweeter than the Honey-comb, or the droppings of the Honey-comb: that is, that which commeth forth without pressing, and is counted the sweetest and purest honey. Now by this comparison is meant, that as the sweet drops of Honey that distill from the Honey-combs, so be the words that come from her mouth.

Hence Observe,

That the speech of the Saints in their prayers and praises are sweet and gracious. Christ tells us, *That out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh, and a good man out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth good things, &c.* The language of *Canaan* is a pure language, and lips that are pure drop forth pure words. When the heart is cleane, the mouth speaketh pure things. Where there are lying, slanderous words, taunts, and revilings, and much vaine babbling, these proceed from the evill treasure in mans heart. But they whose lips drop as the Honey-combs, have their speech alwayes gracious, powdered with salt, to know how to answer every man, Collos. 4. 6. Even such as minister grace to the hearers, Ephes. 4. 29. As grace was powred into the lips of Christ, Psal. 45. 2. So by the communication of his grace, the speech of his people is made gracious. The Prophet complained, *That he was a man of polluted lips, then the Seraphin flew unto him with a hot coale in his hand, which he had taken from the Altar with the Tongr, and touched his month, and said, lo this hath touched thy lips, thine iniquity shall be taken away, and thy sin purged.* Isa. 6. 5, 6, 7. *All our sufficiency is of God,* as saith the Apostle, 2 Cor. 3. 5. And therefore all holy speech proceedeth from him, for none can say *Jesus is the Lord,* but by the spirit of God, 1 Cor. 12. 1. But
now

now further, the speech of the spouse is not only most sweet, but wholesome and nourishing, which is expressed in the following words.

Honey and milke are under thy Tongue.

Honey and milke are for nourishment; it is said of Christ in his Child-hood, *Butter and Honey shall he eat, untill he have knowledge to refuse evill and doe good*, Isa. 7. 15. The Land of *Canaan* is called in sundry places of the Scripture, a Land that floweth with Milke and Honey, meaning that it had abundance of all things profitable and pleasant for this life; understanding by *Milke* things of necessary and profitable use, and by *Honey* things of pleasure and delight, and so the holy Spirit here doth meane, the sweet, comfortable, and nourishing words of faith, love, and the like. Also we may understand fit food for all sorts of Christians, both for strong ones and weake ones. *Milke* most properly belongeth to children, as appears, 1 Cor. 3. 2. & Heb. 5. 12, 13. And *Honey* to them of more strength, as examples of the Scripture, and reason it selfe teacheth in *Jonathan*, *Sauls Sonne*, 1 Sam. 14. 27. And in *John Baptist*, Mat. 3. 4. Thus it pleaseth God in the Scripture to compare the doctrine of the Gospel, which proceeds out of the mouth of the Spouse to Milke, to Honey, to Wine, to Water, and many such like things. See Isa. 55. 1. & Psal. 19. 10.

By *under the tongue*, seemeth to be meant the secret and inward parts, as the mind and heart. Thus *Davida* is said to exalt God *under his tongue*, Psal. 66. 17. declaring his uprightnesse and sincerity thereby. It is said in Prov. 5. 3. *The lips of a strange woman drop as Honey-Comb, and her mouth is more smooth then Oyle*. Now by

by this shee is said to intice men to folly, and as it followeth in the next verse, *The end of her is bitter as worme wood, sharp as a two-edged sword, her feet goe downe to death, &c.* And the Apostle saith, that *some by good words and faire speeches, deceiue the hearts of the simple,* Rom. 16. 18. And the Psalmist speaketh thus, *The words of his mouth were sweeter then Butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer then Oyle, yet were they drawne swords,* Psal. 55. 21. And *Adders payson is under their lips,* Psal. 140. 3. Of the wicked it is said, *Their throat is an open Sepulcher, they have used their tongues to deceit, the poison of Aspes is under their lips, their mouth is full of cursing and bitternesse.* By these speeches are meant the deceitfullnesse of the wicked. So on the contrary, when it is said, *Honey and milke are under her lips,* it is meant of the sincerity of her graces. So that the words of faith and holinesse, which proceed from sincerity and uprightnesse of heart, are very comfortable and nourishing words.

Hence Observe,

That the words of the Spouse, which proceed from faith and sincerity, are not onely gracious, but nourishing words. The Apostle Peter desireth the Saints to drinke of the sincere milke of the word, that they might grow thereby, 1 Pet. 2. 2. That is, the word of the Spirit, given out by the Saints. The plenty of grace in the times of the Gospell is promised under the simily of abundance of milke, and that every one should eat butter and honey, Mat. 7. 20. Gracious and heavenly words proceeding from the Spirit of God in the Saints, such administer grace to the hearers, Ephes. 4. 29. So much for the sweet, wholesome, and nourishing Speech of the Spouse: now followeth the praise of her sweet favour.

And

And the smell of thy Garments is like the smell of Lebanon.

Lebanon was a place where grew most sweet Trees, and Herbs, concerning the pleasantnesse whereof, we have spoken before. The Lord promiseth his people that their smell should be as *Lebanon*, through the dew of his grace, *Hos. 14. 5; 6, 7.* As *Lebanon* was more sweet then all other woods, so is the grace of the Spouse above all worldly graces. Now in that he saith, *Thy Garments smell, &c.* he seems to allude to a Speech borrowed from *Isaac* when he blessed *Jacob*, where it is written, *He came neere and kissed him, then he smelled the savour of his garments, and blessed him, and said, behold the smell of my Sonne is as the smell of a field, which the Lord hath blessed, Genes. 27. 27.* So here, he commendeth the smell of the Garments of the Spouse, meaning, that the graces and gifts wherewith he had adorned the Church, as particularly her faith, doctrine, and conversation, and administrations were the same, as in respect of pleasant delight, yea, more to him by much, then sweet-smelling Garments were, to joyne lovers together.

Hence Observe,

That the Spouse is perfumed with such graces, that all her Garments have a smell of sweet odours. This is not meant of bodily cloathing, for many of the Saints have lived in poverty, cloathed in simple apparrell: but it is to be understood of the spirituall cloathing, where the filthy raggs of the old man are put off, and the new man put on, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him, *Col. 3. 9, 10.* This is the cloathing, of which it is said, *Thou hast a few names*

in gardens, which have not defiled their Garments, and they shall walke with me in white, for they are worthy, Rev. 3. 4. He was cast forth from the marriage that wanted the wedding Garment, Mat. 22. for the Garments of the Bride are sweet, even as the savour of Lebanon, where pleasant and odouriferous Trees, Herbs, and Spices grew in abundance. The Garments of Zion are called beautiful, Isa. 52. 1. And the righteousness of the Saints is said to be of White linnen, cleane and bright, Revel. 19. 8. for they have put on Christ, Gal. 3. 27. God maketh manifest the favour of his knowledge, (by them) in every place, for they are unto God a sweet savour in Christ, 2 Cor. 2. 14, 15. But as Jacob was cloathed with the Garments of Esau, his elder Brother, which gave such a scent, by which he got the blessing; so the Spouse is cloathed, not with his owne Garments of fleshly wildome, or legall righteousness, but with the glorious Garments of Christ, being cloathed with the anointed: so that in commending her Garments, he commendeth but his owne anointings in the Spouse, wherewith shee is cloathed. Thus have we seen every great commendations of the Church, but yet here are further, for it followeth,

VERS. 12.

A garden inclosed is my sister, my Spouse, a spring shut up, a fountaine sealed.

Christ being about to commend the fruits which he caused the Church to bring forth, doth first set forth her aptnesse thereto. In this verse, and in the two following verses doth also commend the fruits themselves by numbring up their sorts.

The aptnesse of the Church to bring forth fruits, as are mentioned in the next verses, is set forth by two similitudes, both which set forth her praise.

1. Shee is compared to a *Garden inclosed*.

2. Shee is likened to a *Spring Or Fountaine*, shut up and sealed.

The first comparison sets forth the praise of the Spouse. 1. In her safe protection in Christ. 2. Her faithfullnesse and chastity to him, for she is as a *Garden inclosed*.

Secondly, shee is highly extolled in that Christ as a spring of living waters unto her, and she alone partaketh of his heavenly treasures. In that it is said, she is a *spring shut up, a fountaine sealed*. So that though many in the world are made partakers of many outward priviledges, yet onely the Saints are made partakers of the sweet waters of life.

A Garden inclosed is my Sister, my Spouse, &c.

If we observe the fore-going words we may read, *Thou art a Garden*. This word *Garden* notes the comeliness of the Church, and the pleasure that Christ took therein. It hath its name in Hebrew of *Protection*, and *preservation*, because great care is taken of a *Garden*. The Church is here so called, as in vers. 12. an *Orchard*, or, as it is in the Hebrew a *Paradise*, as if it were the onely *Eden* of delight. All the world is wilderness or wild field in comparison unto it.

Hence Note,

That the Spouse is Christs Garden of delight. So Christ compareth his Church to a *Vineyard*. Now will I sing to my Beloved, a song of my Beloved touching his *Vineyard*: My Beloved had a *Vineyard* in a very fruitfull hill, he hedged

12
Horius,
a rad.

13
Operatur: pro-
tectio, defen-
dit, conser-
uat.

it, and gathered out the ſtones, planted it with the beſt plants, built a Tower in the miſſe thereof, and alſo made a Wine-ſpreſſe therein, Iſa. 5. 1, 2. The Church is Gods Garden or Orchard, and that in theſe reſpects.

1. The Garden is ſeuered from all the reſt of the ground, from the field and from the wilderneſſe. So the Saints are ſeuered to be elect veſſels of honour, from the other Clay which is ordained to make veſſels of wrath. Jacob and his Poſterity was ſeparated being Children of the Promise, from Eſau and his Poſterity, which are according to the fleſh. Paul was ſeparated to the Goſpell, Rom. 1. 1. And which is more, he was ſeparated from his Mothers womb, and called him by his grace to receive his Sonnie in him, Galath. 3. 26.

2. In a Garden are all manner of pleaſant and whoſome Hearbs and Trees growing: So in the Church are all manner of uſefull ſpirits ſpringing up as the Trees of righteouſneſſe, to the praiſe of God.

3. A Garden is a place of pleaſure where men uſe to reſreſh themſelves, and take pleaſure to walke in. So Chriſt taketh pleaſure in his Church, where he ſaith, *I thou art all faire*, &c. yea, Chriſt doth walk delightfully in this Garden, and calleth his friends thither to walke with him.

4. In a Garden is abundance of paines taken, to plant and dreſſe, and the like. So Chriſt worketh in his Garden, where he ſaith, *Know yee not that I muſt goe about my Fathers buſineſſe*, Luke 2. 49. He ſaith, he hath finiſhed the worke which the Father gave him to doe, John 17. 4. And what could I have done more for my Vineyard, which I have not done?

5. A Garden is commonly planted with the beſt plants,

plants, as God planted *Eden*, and the Master of the Vineyard did the like in his Vineyard, *Iſa. 5. 1.* So that the Trees of the Garden grow not naturally, as those in the Wildernesse, which beare no fruit, but are planted by the labour of the husband-man. Thus David saith, *The just man shall be like a Tree planted by the water-side, which shall bring forth his fruit in due season, Psal. 1. 3.* All the Trees in Christs Vineyard are planted by God, as Christ saith, *Every plant which my Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up, Mat. 15. 13.* All plants in a Garden are not of one kind, neither doe they bring forth the same fruits, but diverse according to their kind: So in the Church, the whole body is but one, but it hath many members; & all of the same body, which is one: now all these members have severall operations and functions: and the members must have the same care one of another, as the Apostle treateth on at large, in *1 Cor. 12.*

Again, as *Jerusalem* is builded as a City compact within it selfe: So the Spouse is not onely compared to a Garden, but

A Garden inclosed.

473
Clausit, ob-
servavit,
pestifera ob-
didit.

The Hebrew word signifies *locked*, or *barred*, that is, close shut up, safe, free from danger, and the like. The word is used for *bolting of a doore*, *2 Sam. 13. 17.* Hence Note,

That the Church is an inclosed Garden. And it is an inclosure for three causes.

1. For distinction from other grounds.
2. For defence and safety.
3. Propriety for the owners owne use.

1. The Church as a Garden is inclosed for disti-

on lake, because it is separated from all other people, as a Garden is separated from the wilderness or common field. As the light was separated from the darkness in the Creation of the world; as the Jews were separated from the Gentiles by the partition-wall, and the most holy place from the Sanctuary, by the veil of the Temple: So the Lord hath separated and chosen his people from among all Nations, Kindreds, and Tongues, forasmuch as this foundation remaineth sure; *the Lord knows who are his*; 2 Tim. 2. 19. And as the Prophet saith; *The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous, and the way of the wicked shall perish*; Psal. 1. 6.

2. This Garden is inclosed also for defence, God hedgeeth it on every side that the wild Boare may doe it no hurt. For walls, doors, locks and bars, are means of defence and safety: thus *Jerusalem* was fortified with locks, and Bars, Nehem. 3. 3. 13. And when such fences are wanting, all things lye to the spoile, as in Isa. 5. 5. Psal. 80. 12. Thus the Lord maketh his Church as a Towne walled about for defence against the enemies, that it cannot be conquered; as *Jerusalem* was compassed about with hills. *They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Sion, which cannot be moved, but standeth for ever: the hills compass Jerusalem round about, so the Lord round about his people, from henceforth, for evermore*, Psal. 125. 1, 2. It is built upon a rock, that the gates of Hell shall not prevaile against it, Mat. 16. 18. And God hath promised to be a wall of fire round about *Jerusalem*, Zech. 2. 5. And strengtheneth the bars of her gates, Psal. 147. 13. He keeps his Vineyard night and day, *that any should hurt it*, Isa. 27. 3.

3. This inclosure of the Church doth intimate the owners propriety, because it belongeth onely to him,
he

he hath it for his owne use. Here is noted the chastity of the Spouse, she goeth not a whoring after other Gods, she is not like the Harlot which sitteth at the doore, and calleth to her the commers by, and saith, *stollen water is sweet*, Prov. 7. 17. But the Spouse of Christ is carefull to keep her selfe and all her plants and fruits holy, chaste, pure unto her beloved onely: *shee openeth the gates that the righteous Nation may enter in, which keepeth the truth* Isa. 26. 2. But shee labours to withstand the invasion of the uncleane and abhominable, that it enter not in, Revel. 21. 27. The Apostle was jealous over the *Corinthians* with a godly jealousie, and hath prepared them for one Husband, to present them as a pure Virgine to Christ, 2 Cor. 11. 2. The Spouse saith, *I am my beloveds, and my beloved is mine*, Song 2. 16. So much for the first comparison, wherein the Spouse was compared to a Garden inclosed. It followeth.

My Sister, my Spouse.

These words were expounded verse 9. of this Chapter, therefore I will not stand here on repetition, but proceed to the second comparison, which is expressed in these words.

A spring shut up, a fountaine sealed.

Here we see are joyned together a Garden full of sweet plants, and a spring and fountaine of living waters. If the plants in a Garden be not watered, all will wither and be fruitlesse. By this comparison is inferred, that the Spouse is not dry and barren, but a fruitfull Garden, it is never without water, and therefore cal'd

A Spring, a fountaine.

A Spring hath its name in Hebrew *Gal*, of the root *Galal*, which signifies the rolling and waving of the waters. Springs and fountaines are never dry, but send forth streams of water continually. So that this signifieth the abundance of waters that the Church is supplied with, it is as a Spring able to water all parts of the Garden.

Hence Observe,

That the garden of Christs Church is plentifully watered by his spirit and grace, and so made fruitfull. This garden is therefore well watered, there is a spring of living waters, which alwayes doe flow, wherewith every herb and pretious plant is watered. Thus Christ himselfe testifieth, saying, *He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water,* John 7. 38. And when the Lord promiseth a full supply of his Spirit, he saith, *I will pour water upon the dry ground, and floods upon him that is thirsty,* Isa. 44. 3. This water fructifieth the barrenesse, molifieth the hardnesse, and cooleth the hot distempers, and moistneth the drinesse of the hearts of the Saints, and so makes them fruitfull Trees of righteousness to Gods praise. Water is comfortable to a thirsty land; so is the supply of the Spirit to a thirsty soule, hence saith David, *My soule gaspeth after thee as a thirsty land,* Psal. 143. 6. A River in Paradise was called *Euphrates* of *inundation* because it maketh glad, so doth the overflowings of the Spirit of Christ into the soule, refresh it, and make it glad and lightsome. It is said that the joy of the Captives returning from *Babylon*, was like the waters of the South, Psal. 126. 4.

Inti-

Intimating, that the *South* parts of the world thirsted after water in a dry Summer. Such is the joy of the dry and thirsty soule, when God causes his spirit to returne upon it, and refresh it with heavenly supplies. It is promised, the Lord will *satisfie thy soule in drought, and make fat thy Bones, and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters faile not*. Isa. 58. 11. Thus the Spouse is a spring and a fountaine, not because shee is the fountaine of grace, but because Christs being in it, it is the onely well-spring or fountaine of the waters of life unto all. But now it is added.

A Fountaine shut up.

Shut up) or *locked, barred*: that is, kept close from enemies: So that though these waters abound, yet doe they flow onely in Christs garden, no other gardens or plants are watered by them. It is so shut up that none can take of these waters, but by Christs consent. These waters are waters of the Sanctuary, and therefore not common to all, none are partakers of these waters, but the Spouse, the Bride, the Lambes wife. It is added.

A Fountaine sealed.

The confirmation of a thing is signified by the sealing of it; so is the confirmation of the Spirit and grace of God, as appears, *John 3. 3. & Ephef. 1. 13*. Now when a thing is sealed, it is concealed from another: so this grace is not communicated to the wicked. Hence it is said, *Bind up the testimony, seale the Law among my Disciples*, Isa. 8. 16. But it is hid from the world, none of them can come and take thereof. This speech tendeth to the same end that the former similitude

similitude did all being spoken according to the manner of their Country, wherein water was not only scanty, and therefore a good blessing to enjoy it : but also there was much adoe to keepe it to themselves, See Gen. 21. 25. also Gen. 26. 17, 18, 19, &c.

Now in that the Spouse is compared to a fountaine *shot up, and sealed* : it doth impart divers things.

First, note.

That those precious waters, by which the Spouse is refreshed, are pure and wholesome waters. For what else should it be a fountaine sealed, but to preserve it pure and wholesome? This spirituall fountaine is not bitter, as the waters of Marah, where the Children of Israel could not drinke. The traditions of men may be compared to such waters, which are filthy & corrupt waters, waters which stand open, are sometimes infected by poison, or other noisome things falling in, as where it is written: there fell a great starre from heaven, burning as a Torch, into the third part of the Rivers, and fountains of water, the name of the starre is wormwood, and the third part of the waters became bitter, and many men died of the waters, Revel. 8. 10. And againe in chap. 16. 14. The Angel poured out his viol upon the Rivers and fountains of water, and they became blood : Thus at the generall Apostacie many of the waters were corrupted, made bitter, and turned into blood. But the fountaine of the Spouse is sealed, no such starre can fall into it, to make it bitter : no such viol can be powred into it to turne it into blood.

Secondly, note. That this Spring and fountaine of living water is only to refresh the spouse.

These

These waters, although they abound, yet they flow not forth of the garden, they be shut up and sealed, none other garden or plants are watered by them. Now some may object, that the doctrine of the Gospel is published to all promiscuously, how is it then a fountaine sealed up? I answer, that the word doth in a sort flow forth to all, which are not the true plants of the Lord; but it doth not water them, they have not lively, spirituall, and effectuall working of it, to make them grow and beare fruit. It is with them, as water falling upon a Rock, which doth only wet the outside and not, soften the rock or stone within. So that though the outward, litterall, and historicall part of the word be common to many, yet the spirituall part, and the lively influence thereof, is peculiar to the Spouse alone. She only is refreshed with these fountains of living water, her plants be watered all with them, and made fruitful. Thirdly Observed.

That the Spouse is shut unto Christ. *That she will bring forth fruit only unto him, and watereth no plants but her owne.* When Solomon would teach spirituall chastitie, he doth thus expresse it: *Drinke water out of thine owne Cistern, and running waters out of thine owne well: let thy fountaine be dispersed abroad, and rivers of waters in the streets: let them be only thine owne, and not strangers with Thee: let thy fountaine be blessed, and rejoyce with the Wife of thy, Eccl. Prov. 5. 17. 18.* Thus the Spouse here is a fountaine sealed up, she is not for strangers and such as passe by, her care is to keepe her selfe holie, pure, and chaste unto her beloved, she watereth only her owne plants, she keepeth watch, least any uncleane thing should enter, she openeth her gates, that only the righteous Nation may enter in, as it is

Isa. 26. 3. Thus we have the Spouse set forth as a well watered garden apt to beare fruit: now what store of all sorts of precious fruits she brought forth, the two next verses doe shew, for here are reckoned up all manner of the best plants.

VERS. 13, 14.

Thy plants are an Orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits, camphire, with spikenard, spikenard and Saffron, Calamus and Cinnamon, with all the trees of frankincense, myrrhe, and aloes, with all the chiefe spices.

Here is the goodliest garden, that ever was heard of, which is not only a garden inclosed, and sealed; but is also full of all sweet plants, here be sweet fruits, here be all the chiefe spices, and sweet incense, here is whatsoever is delectable and precious. Christ in his commendations of his Spouse, both enumerate and reckon up all manner of the best plants, saying.

Thy plants are as an Orchard of Pomegranates, &c.

Thy Plants, or thy off-spring, that is, thy Children or Members, all that are set or planted in thee. The Hebrew word translated plants, comes of sending forth, that is, of growing, and bringing forth fruit: hereby is shewn, how full of pleasant plants the Lords garden is, it is not only fenced in, and well watered, but also replenished with wholesome, sweet and precious Plants.

סלה
Mist, emit-
fit, inde
שלווחות
Propagines.

Are as an Orchard, or Paradise: so called of the He-

פרדס
Paradisus.

brew word *Parde*, a place set with pleasant plants, and Trees, as appeares, *Ecclesi. 2. 5.* As it were the garden of *Eden*, to which all the world is but as a wild Field or *Widernesse*.

רמוני
puniceorum
malorum.

Of *pomegranates*, or *pomegranate-Apples*, so *Arins Mont.* renders it; they are so called, because they were full of grains or kernels, these were very deare and precious, yea very healthfull and good: for they were good to repress the heat of choler, and malignitie of Fevers, they also comfort the stomach and belly, and prevent faintings and swoonings.

With *pleasant fruits*, that is, abounding with sweet fruits, and pleasant things; such as these were part of *Josephs* blessing, as we may reade, *Deut. 33. 13.* of the precious fruits put forth by the Sun and Moone, so that beside the *Pomegranate*; there were all other pleasant fruits, and precious things, some particulars whereof he reckoneth in this verse, and in the verse following.

כפרית
Cypri.

Camphire, or *Camphire fruits*, or *Cypres berries*, for the word is of the plurall number. *Camphire* is a sweet gumme, but *Cypres* is a tree, very pleasant and well smelling. The Hebrew *Copher*, (from whence the *Cypres*-tree seemeth to be derived) signifieth *Atonement* and *propitiation*. *Camphire* with its sweetnesse doth much refresh the Spirits, and cheereth up the minde. See this more explained, in Chap. 1. 14.

With *Spikenard*, or *nards*, this word is also in the plural number, though in the next vers it is used singularly: the plurall *Spikenards*, seemeth to imply all sorts of *nards*: for there are divers sorts: that which is of the true *nard*, is of exceeding sweet and pleasant smell, by which it stayeth distillations of the head, and digesteth

getteth cold humours, and the like. It was precious and costly, as appeares *Mark*, 14. 3. Also *Joh.* 12. 3. And it groweth in *India*, *Syria*, and other places thereabouts. The word *Spikenard* is framed of the Hebrew word *nerd*, whence the Greekes call it *Nardos*, and the Latines *Nardus*. See it more explained in Chapter 1. 14.

Vers. 14. *Spikenard and Saffron, &c.*

Spikenard, this is spoken of already in the former verse. And *Saffron*, a thing precious and profitable to comfort the heart, and helpeth digestion, &c. *Saffron* hath its name in Hebrew, *carcom*, because of its yellow colour.

Calamus, or *Cane*, or *reed*, it is like this is meant of that which is called *Calamus Aromaticus*, or *odoratus*, for the excellent smell it had; and was wont to be brought out of *Arabia felix*, into *Judeah*: and was appointed to be used in the consecration of the holy oyle, *Exod.* 30. 23. It helps the passages of urine, and also the wombe in conception.

This word *Calamus* hath its name after the Greek, in Hebrew *Caneh*, it is a *sweet reed*, bought and brought out of farre Countries, as appeares, by *Jer.* 2. 20. And also *Isa.* 43. 24.

Cynamon. This is also farrefetcht, and of great price and excellency. This aromaticall *Cynamon*, commeth of the Hebrew name *Kinemon*, and it is the barke of a Tree, used for sweet odours: This was also used in the consecration of the holy Oyle, *Exod.* 30. 23.

With all the Trees of *Frankincense*, that is, all Trees bearing incense, or matter that yeildeth a sweet smell or savour, whereof also he reciteth two in the following

following words, as *myrrhe* and *Aloes*. *Frankincense* was used in the holy perfume or incense, *Exod.* 30. 34. 35. And is good to help and reſtraine ulcers, gouts and fluxes of blood, &c.

Myrrhe, This was of an excellent ſavour, as appeares, *Pſal.* 45. 8. *Myrrhe* is the ſweet gumme that iſſueth from the myrrhe Tree: it was one of the firſt of the chiefe ſpices that was put into the holy Ointment, which was made, *Exod.* 30. 23. It hath its name of the Hebrew *Mor*: no gum is preferred before it, ſaith *Plinie*. With myrrhe the dead body of Chriſt was embalmed, *John* 19. 39. And with it the wiſemen honoured him at his birth, *Mat.* 2. See this more largely opened in Chap. 1. 13.

Plin. hiſt.
lib. 12. cap.
15.

And *Aloes*, this is a certaine kind of ſweet and precious wood, which, in regard of its fragrancie is put with *Myrrhe*, in *Pſal.* 45. 8. And is alſo uſed to anoint dead bodies, *John* 19. 30. 40. *Aloes* comes of the Hebrew *Ahaloth*, it was ſuch a ſweet wood wherewith perfumes were alſo made. It is a tree growing in *Arabia* & *India* which giveth a very ſweet odour, and is like the *thine* wood ſpoken of in *Revel.* 18. 12. He concludeth by adding,

With all the chiefe ſpices.

עֶסְכֵּל
רֹאשִׁי
בְּשֵׁמִים

Cum omni-
bis capiti-
bis aroma-
tum, Arius
Mont.

In the Hebrew it is, *with all the heads of ſpices*, that is, with all moſt coſtly, ſweet, and precious things, the principall, and moſt excellent of ſpices: See the like in *Ezek.* 27. 22. Now by theſe fruits are ſignified the ſpiritual graces of the Saints, which are precious and ſweet before God, and man, ſuch are the fruits of the Spirit, mentioned in *Gal.* 5. 22. 23.

Hence

Hence, Observe.

That the Spouse, Christs garden is full of sweet and pleasant fruit.

Hence the graces in her are compared to every sweet Tree & to every rare & costly thing. The Saints are the goodly plants of the Lords, and they doe beare all these sweet and delectable fruits before mentioned; what a goodly garden hath the Lord planted to himselfe? where all pleasants grow? never had any earthly Prince such a garden with plants of pomegranates, with sweet fruits, as Camphire, Spikenard, sweet Calamus, and Cynamon, with all the Trees of incense, myrhe, and Aloes, and all chiefe spices: All this tendeth to the commendations, after this sort. That as these gardens be most excellent, and worthy to be beloved and esteemed, that have the most rare, best, and precious things grow in them: so these excellent graces and fruits of the Church, doe commend the same to God and men, and make Christ the Bridegroom (as it were) enamoured with the love thereof. The Church then as the Spouse of Christ is beautified and adorned with the gifts and graces of the Spirit, even as a plentifull and pleasant garden, with infinite numbers of rare and pleasant simples, as they call them, or fruits, whereby shee is made commendable, spreading her fame far and nigh, insomuch that Christ her husband is even, as it were, ravished with her love: yet notwithstanding she hath nothing of her owne to move him to that affection, but all that she hath cometh from him, as appears in *Ezek. 16. 14.* So much for the first part of the Chapter, wherein Christ did so highly commend the Spouse: the second part followeth, wherein the Spouse makes some returns of Christs praises to him.

VERS.

VER 3. 15, 16, 17.

A fountaine of gardens, a well of living waters, and streames from Lebanon.

Awake, O north-winde, and come thou south, blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out: let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.

I am come into my garden, my Sister, my Spouse, I have gathered my myrrhe with my spice, I have eaten my honey-combe with my honey, I have drunke my wine with my milke, eat, O friends, drinke, yea, drinke abundantly, O beloved!

HAVING dispatched the first part of the Chapter, now followeth the second part thereof, wherein wee may Observe.

First, the prayer of the Spouse, verse 15, 16.

Secondly, the answer of Christ, verse 17.

The prayer of the Spouse, desireth the presence of Christ, who doth indeed minister power to her to be a garden, and water, to water her withall: therefore first, she setteth forth Christ under these similitudes, which are agreeable to such things, as cause fruitfulness in the garden.

First, That he is the *fountaine of the garden, a well of living waters*, the very flood of God excelling the water which flow from *Lebanon*.

Secondly, That he is all the winds, both hot and cold, binding and opening, *North*, and *South*, fit for every season, to make the garden prosper. Then she setteth downe the parts of her prayer, for his presence, in two respects.

First, To minister unto her the cause of all fruitfulness,

selfe, both for winde and weather, and nourishment of water, all which is meant in these words, *Arise North, and come South, and blow on my garden, let the waters of his spirit overflow all my spices.*

Secondly, To accept from the Church the pleasant fruits of holy services, the oblation of men renewed by the Spirit, the fruits of the lips in praise and thanksgiving, &c. in saying, *Let my beloved come into his garden and eate his pleasant fruit.*

A fountaine of gardens, &c.

This seemeth to be the speech of the Spouse unto Christ, *O thou fountaine, &c.* Now whereas the Lord had commended the Spouse in the former verse, to be a sweet garden, so well watered, and of such precious plants: she now ascribeth all the praise thereof unto him, as if she had said thus: I humbly acknowledge the things to be in me, that thou hast said, howbeit I confesse, that they are not of my selfe, but from thee, the fountaine of all good things, and though that I do performe the dutie of a fountaine towards mine, yet thou art he, to whom indeed the name of fountaine and living waters; yea of life it selfe doth only appertaine: yea, thou art the only fountaine, and I doe but water others as from thee, *O fountaine of gardens, &c.* It is from the fountaine, that all the Rivers flow, (in *Psalm*. 104. 10.) which water the gardens and plants in them, so making them greene and fruitfull. The Prophet *Ezekiel*, speaking of the glorie of *Assiria*, comparing him to the Cedars of *Lebanon*, with faire branches, saith *The waters made him great; the deep set him on high, with her rivers running about his plants, &c.* *Ezek.* 31. 4, 5.

U u u

And

And so when desolation is threatened to the Church of the *Jewes*, it is likened to a garden that *hath no water*, *Isa. 1. 30.* It is to be noted also, that the universall Church is but one garden, and all the particular Churches be gardens, so that her speech and his doe not differ, when he calleth her a garden, and she calleth him a fountaine of gardens, when he calleth her a fountaine sealed up, which doth water all the plants, shee doth acknowledge the truth thereof unto his praise, affirming that he is the fountain of the gardens; that is, looke whatsoever waters of life be in her, yea, in all particular Churches, they flow from him, he is the fountaine.

Hence Observe.

That Christ is an overflowing fountaine of living water, refreshing the garden of his Church, with streames of his fulnesse.

The Spouse doth acknowledge all her supplies from him, in one word, when she calleth him, a fountaine of gardens. It pleased the Father, that in him should all fulnesse dwell, *Col. 1. 19.* And in him dwelleth all the fulnesse of the God-head bodily, *Col. 2. 9.* Now of his fulnesse have we all received, and grace for grace, *Joh. 1. 16.* And he is made unto us of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, *1 Cor. 1. 30.* Christ by his Spirit doth refresh his Churches, and all their plants, satisfieth their soules in drought, and maketh fat their bones: that their soule is *Like a watered garden*, and they shall not sorrow any more at all, *Jer. 31. 12.* She addeth.

A well of living waters.

The Spouse meaneth by this word, continuall waters.

ers, and such as cannot be drawne drie : thus the well that *Isaacs* servants diged in the valley, is called a well of springing waters, *Gen. 26. 19.* in the Hebrew it is, *living waters*, that is, such as springeth continually, and drieth not up : so that by living water here is meant, springing and running water, such as is not dry with heat, neither putrifies, but is alwayes wholesome, and giveth life continually.

Hence Observe.

That Christ is a continuall spring of living water to refresh and comfort his Church with all supplies.

The graces, and waters of life, which doe flow from Christ upon his Church, are such as can never be dryed up, they flow from a bottomles fountaine, albeit he bestoweth his graces and gifts from time to time, in never so great abundance, yet they be not diminished. Christ is a fountaine never drawne drie, though he communicate never so much, yet he hath never the lesse in himselfe : so Christ giveth water of life, of which, whosoever drinketh, *It shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life, Job. 4. 14.* And againe, speaking of the Spirit, which they that beleve on him, should receive, he saith, *He that believeth on me, &c. out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water, Job. 7. 38.* Christ is an everlasting spring, alwayes sending forth waters of life to refresh his Saints : the supply that he gives is constant : tis not like a winter-bourne, that failes, and dries up in the Summer : but like an ever springing fountaine, whose streames are never drie. Now she still proceedeth in the commendations of her beloved, and saith.

And streames from Lebanon.

Streames, running, or flowing from Lebanon, the water that came from Lebanon, was pure and cleare water, yea, Jerdan it self watering the Land of Israel, came after a sort from thence, and no doubt but the water of Lebanon, tasted of that sweetnesse, that is mentioned before, in vese 11. of this Chapter Lebanon being a place of so many sweet Trees and Plants, the streames flowing thence must needs be sweet also: even as the waters that flow out of the hills, where Cinnamon, and Cloves grow, do also partak of the sweetnesse thereof. Then the summe of all is thus much, the Spouse commendeth Christ, first, for the fulnesse and plenitude of all graces, in that she calleth him, The fountaine of gardens.

Secondly, For the perpetuities of the graces, in that she calleth him, The well of living waters. And lastly, For the sweetnesse and pleasantnesse of the same, in that she resembleth him to the most sweet and pleasant waters, flowing from Lebanon.

Hence Observe.

That the water of life flowing from Christ to his Saints, is very sweet and pleasant.

David saith, Thou ledest me by the still waters. In the Hebrew it is, Waters of rest, that is, most quiet, calme, and still waters, such as give rest and refreshing. Christ which is in the midst of the throne of God, shall lead his Saints to the (sweet, pleasant, and) lively fountains of waters, Revel. 7. 16. 17. This water is excellently resembled by the water of the sanctuarie, spoken of in Ezek. 47. 6. 10. where waters issuing out of the Sanctuarie, ranne along Galilee, and to the plaine.

plaine, and into the Sea, &c. and every living thing that moveth whithersoever the Rivers come, shall live, &c. and every thing shall live whither the River cometh. So in Revel. 22. 1. Out of the Throne of God, and of the Lamb, a pure River of water of life proceedeth. Water of life must needs be such as doth cheere and refresh the spirits. This living water flowing from Christ doth give life, and preserve life in all those that drinke it. And it is said to be *cleare as Crystall*, Rev. 22. 1. that is, transparent; and exceeding all Fountaines in cleer-ness, most pleasant to the eye, as shewing all that is therein to the very bottome; and most pleasant to the tast, as free from mud and filth.

Now we shall proceed to the other part of the Spouses speech, which is expressed in the next verse, wherein she maketh earnest prayer, saying,

V E R S E 16.

make, O North wind, and come thou South, blew upon my Garden, that the spices thereof may flow out: Let my beloved come into his Garden, and eat his pleasant fruit.

In these words the Spouse intreateth graces from her head and husband Christ, to make her fruitfull withall. It is a notable turning of her speech to the winds and quarters of the world, attributing sense unto things without life, which is also common to Poets and lovers, especially in their Love-songs.

There be two parts of this prayer.

1. Shee craveth the inspiration and gracious gifts of the spirit, by turning her speech to the winds to blow upon his Garden in these words, *Arise, O North wind, &c.* Shee giveth a reason of her desire, *That the spices thereof may flow out.*

2. Shee

2. Shot intreateth Christs presence, inviting him to come into his Garden speaking thus, *Let my beloved come into his Garden,* together also with the end thereof, *To eat his pleasant fruits.*

Awake, O North wind, and come thou South, &c.

וַיִּגְלוּ
Vigilavit,
evigilavit,
transitive,
excitavit
vel suscita-
vit.

Awake) or *arise*, or, *raise up* (thy selfe) *thou North wind.* He meaneth the North quarter, because it is cold and moist, as being far removed from the Sun, and this is spoken, as having regard to the day-time, and hot Country of the Land of *Judea*.

And come thou South: This quarter is hot and dry, and both these winds are joyned together; So that though the North and South winds be of contrary qualities, as cold, and hot, moist, and dry, yet are they both fitting for her estate, which sometime needeth sharp reproofe, like the *nipping North wind*, and sometime sweet and gentle consolation, like unto the *South wind*, sweet, and cherishing. Now under these quarters, and by such an equal mixture of the winds, no doubt, but is meant such means whereby Christ doth refresh the Garden of his Church, to cleanse the aire of it, and make it more sweetfull; and withall by the contrary course of winds, purgeth the aire, and giveth sometimes cleare, and sometimes dropping seasons, as may serve most for the benefite of the Garden. Now that she may have the full benefite of these winds, she addeth,

And blow upon my Garden.

Blow, that is, even as it were by blasts or blowing from sundry quarters: worke that which thou seest to be good and profitable for me. *Blow upon my Garden,*

den,

den, that is, cause the wind to blow upon me. It is the Lord that bringeth forth the winds out of his treasures, Psal. 135. 7. and speaketh unto them to blow. Hereby is signified the quickning efficacy of the spirit of Christ, as it is in Ezek. 37. 9. the Prophet was willed to prophesy to the Wind, and say thereunto, Come from the foure winds, O wind, and blow upon these flames, that they may live. And againe the efficacy of the spirit of God is resembled by the wind in John 3. 8. So on the contrary, the restraining of Gods spirit, let out by the Gospell, is signified by foure Angells holding the foure winds of the Earth, That the wind should not blow on the Earth, nor on the Sea, nor on any Tree, Revel. 7. 1. Now it is something darke in that the Church calleth

My Garden.

The Spouse doth not call it her Garden, as having any thing of her selfe; for whatsoever Ornaments, Flowers, Plants, &c. shee hath, shee hath them from Christ, but by reason of the nigh conjunction which is betweene Christ and his Church, she being flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone, Ephes. 5. 30. yea, and the titles of the one and the other, being indifferently attributed to the one and the other, as where the Church is called by the name of Christ, 1 Cor. 12. 12. Now from the first part of the Churches prayer, Observe,

First, from the comparison fetcht from the wind, attributing sense to things without life, is generall note.

That Christ hath the command of all creatures. He calls forth the winds out of his treasures when he pleases, and

restraineth them againe at his will. This drew the Disciples in admiration to say, *What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the Seas obey him?* Mat. 8. 27.

Secondly, we see here, that Christ speaks to contrary winds, both in respect of their quality and quarters from whence they blow.

Hence Note,

That Christ can bring good things to his Church by contrary meanes.

A cold nipping North wind, and a pleasant cherishing South wind, may both be suitable for the Garden of Christ. The Spouse may sometimes stand in need of purging, and sometimes of cherishing from whence it is the spirit of God carries it selfe suitable to both conditions: and the Saints may be sure, that all the winds blow them good. Thus we have the Apostle testifying, *That all things worke together for good to them that love God*, Rom. 8. 28. And *that all things are ours, Paul, Apollo, Cephas, things present, and to come, life, death,* &c. 1 Cor. 3. 21.

Thirdly Observe,

That the Spouse desires the heavenly breathing of Christs spirit to come upon her. It is not the North wind, and the South wind which blow upon the Trees, and that are felt of our bodies, that are meant here, which blow upon these heavenly plants: but it is an heavenly breathing which she here requireth, even the inspiration of the spirit of God, which is called the spirit of Sanctification, the spirit of adoption, &c. Now this Spirit of God may well be resembled to wind, and that in such respects as these.

1. The nature of the wind is to *blow where it listeth*, John

John 3. 8. So the Spirit of the Lord blows freely, and opens the heart, powring in abundance of grace: it doth awaken and draw forth all the affections to Christ.

2. The wind is of a prevailing force, it beats downe all before it: so the Spirit is mighty in operation; it brings downe high Mountaines and hills, that be exalted against Christ, and layes them leuell: no man can prevaile against the spirit of God.

3. A man receives his breath and life naturally from the aire, a man cannot live without wind: no more can a regenerate man live without the spirit of God: for by the breathings of the spirit the soule of a Christian lives.

4. The wind is of a cooling nature: so the spirit doth coole the hot distempers in the soule; allaying all unnaturall heats, and bringeth the soule into a good frame and temper.

5. The wind is of a cleansing nature, it purgeth the aire and the water, and keepeth them from infection: So the spirit of God purgeth the heart from dead works, to serve the living God in newnesse of life.

6. The wind hath a cherishing, and a fructifying force with it: so the Spirit quickneth and cherisheth the soule, it makes the heart that was as a barren wilderness, to become a fruitfull Garden.

For these respects and the like, the sweet gale of the spirit is compared to *wind*. Hence it is, that the Spouse desireth that the winds may

Blow upon his Garden.

Hence Observe, Fourthly,

That the Spouse alway stands in need of the blowing of the

X x x

Spirit.

Spirit. The Spouse hath no power to any thing naturally, but is very dead and dull, and therefore stands in need alwayes to be quickned by the blowing of the spirit. All the beginnings of the worke of God in us, growth, and ending, is from meet grace, and nothing else but grace. Therefore we must acknowledge all the adings of Christs spirit in us: and though *Solomon* Observes, it will be hindrance to observe the winds, *Eccles. 7. 4.* yet here it will be our wisdom to observe the gales of the Spirit, and to be affected by it.

Lastly Observe,
That the Spouse is the Garden of Christ. The Prophet *Isaiah* sheweth, *That the Vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the house of Israel; and the men of Judah are his pleasant plants, Isa. 5. 7.* God doth plant it, visite, protect, and water it, yea, he takes pleasure in his Spouse, as in his pleasant Garden. But I shall not stand on this point, because it was largely treated on in Verse 12. of this Chapter. But I shall proceed to the reason or ground of this request, which is as followeth.

That the spices thereof may flow out.

By *Spices* here are meapt all manner of graces: and by *flowing out*, shee meaneth continuall abode and increase in the same, and that shee may be more and more fruitfull, that her fruits may ripen, and be abundant, for by the gracious gifts of the spirit, breathing upon the Spouse, her soule is refreshed and comforted, and all her graces doe increase: so that we see to what end shee desires the wind of the spirit to blow, that the spices thereof may flow out: for those good things in her would else lye dead, and bound up, unlesse the spirit let them out.

Hence

Hence Observe, *First*, *That the Spirit that must first quicken us, so it is the Spirit that draws forth that life and grace that we have.*

It is the Spirit that must first kindle the fire of the Spirit, life, and glory in our souls, and then increase the flame thereof. First, the wind of the Spirit blows, then the spices of grace flow out.

Secondly Note,

That the goodnesse of the Saints must be an overflowing goodnesse. The graces of the Saints must abound, not only in themselves, but flow out to others: as it was said of John, *he was a burning, and a shining light.* The Spirit of God in his people is like the box of Ointment that Mary powred out, which perfumes all the whole house with its savour.

A Christian never thinks he hath received enough of the Spirit, unlesse it makes him to abound in himselfe, and flow out to others; unlesse it be alwayes making new discoveries of God and Christ to the soule, and new revelations of the bosome of the Father, whereby the soule is refreshed, and the fragrancy of all his graces drawne out to his owne comfort, and the good of others. As the Sun draws forth the fragrancy and sweetnesse that is in the flowers of the Earth, when it shines upon them; and as the wind doth convey those sweet smells unto us: so doth the Spirit draw forth the savour of grace, and convey the smell thereof to our owne souls and to others, where by we come to have the benefite thereof. Thus far of the first part of her prayer, desiring the North and South wind to awake and blow upon his Garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. In the next place we have the Spouses invitation of Christ to come into his Gar-

den, with the end thereof, in these words.

Let my Beloved come into his Garden, and eat of his pleasant fruits.

Let my beloved come, &c. In these words the Spouse desireth Christs presence, meaning, that shee would have him come and dwell in her, even as he had promised in the sixth Verse of this Chapter. Thus shee invites Christ to come into her, as into his House or Temple, calling him Beloved, because the streame of her affections run towards him. Christ was (no question) in his Church before, but she desireth a farther manifestation of his presence, glory, and life in her.

Hence Observe,

That where there is the least appearance of Christ in the soule of any, there is further desire of Christs presence and glory, to be manifested.

The Spouse never thinks shee is neer enough her Beloved; untill shee come to the full enjoyment of him. They alwayes waite for a farther revelation of the Lord from Heaven, and cry, *Come Lord Jesus, come quickly*, Revel. 22. 17. That is, come manifest thy selfe more and more in the revelation of thy selfe and glory. It is from the Spirit that we desire a greater measure of the Spirit, and it is from some discovery of Christ in us, that we desire a more perfect revelation of him.

Now followeth the end and Reason wherefore the Spouse desireth Christ to come into his Garden, which is,

To eat his pleasant fruits.

The end of the Churches prayer is, that Christ might receive honour and glorie, by that spirit of grace given out by him unto her, shee would have Christ come in, and accept his owne graces, which she calleth *pleasant fruits*; or *fruits of his precious things*. The word translated *pleasant* is of the pluarall number, and may be rendered *sweetnesses*, and may note unto us two things.

First, The plenitude and fulnesse of grace in the Saints, they are full of sweet things; to wit, the graces of the Spirit.

Secondly, It doth denote and set out the excellency of grace, it doth farre exceed in excellencie all the glorious things in the world. Now is it not fit that Christ should eat the fruit of his owne Vine, have comfort of his owne garden, tast of his own fruits? The greatest delight that Christ hath in the world, is in the garden of his Church: therefore, that he might take a full delight therein, he makes it fruitfull, stored with precious fruits, as growing from Plants, set by his own hand, relished of his own spirit, and so fitted for his tast.

Hence Observe.

That the Saints are made fruitfull by the breathings in of Christ's spirit upon them.

When the winde of the Spirit blows upon the garden of the soule, the graces of the Spirit, as sweet spices flow out in abundance: So that now the Spouse is not like Israel of old, an empty Vine, Hos. 10. 1. neither doth she beare Wild-grapes, even grapes of gall, and bitter clusters, as in Isa. 5. 2. but she is filled with the fruits.

fruits of righteousness, as the Apostle speaketh, *Phil. 1. 11.* And is fruitfull in every good worke, *Col. 1. 10.* And hath her fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life, *Rom. 6. 22.* The Spouse doth abound in fruitfulness, and her fruit doth exceed in the excellencie thereof.
 Secondly Observe.

That the fruits of the spirit in the Saints, are very pleasing and acceptable unto Christ.

They are called his pleasant fruits, as being those he takes much delight in. Christ cannot but delight in the graces of his owne Spirit, with which, and for which he is to be honoured. The holie actions of the Saints are called fruits, *Joh. 15.* now fruits doe not only signifie an issuing from the root, but also pleasure and delight. The acceptation of those fruits, and the communication of farther grace, is signified by mutuall supping together, *Revel. 3. 20.* Now we must know that the fruits springing from our natures, that relish of the old man, are not thus pleasing to Christ; but the fruits that proceed from the Spirit, or new man: such as these are acceptable, being perfumed with sweet odour, spoken of *Rev. 8. 13.* Christ besprinkles our persons, prayers, and praises with his owne blood, and so makes them acceptable to God, *Heb. 9. 13.*

Thirdly, Observe.

That the Spouse doth ascribe all her good things unto Christ.

His pleasant fruits, saith the Church, all these good are his, the garden is his, the fruit is his; yea, and all the pleasantness and preciousness of the fruit is his; that as David said, *Of thine own Lord I give thee;* so doth the Spouse ascribe whatever is good in her to

from Christ. The Apostle ascribes his spirituall life to Christ, Gal. 2. 20. *I live (saith he) yet not I, but Christ lives in me*: least it might seem too high for the Apostle to say, *I live*, he doth as it were correct himselfe by saying, *yet it is Christ liueth in me.*

Now upon the Churches request, for Christ to come into his garden, follows his gracious answer unto the Churches desire, being ready to fulfill the desire of them that feare him, in the next Verse: saying,

VER. 17.

I am come into my garden, my Sister, my Spouse, I have gathered my myrrhe with my Spice, I have eaten my honey-combe with my honey; I have drunke my wine with my milke; eate O friends, drinke, yea, drinke abundantly O beloved.

The effect of the Churches prayer was, that Christ would accept from her the fruits of service, praise and thanksgiving. In this place he makes answer, wherein wee may Observe.

First, Christs condescending to his Churches request, he is present in his garden, and performeth those Offices shee prayed for, *I am come into my garden.*

Secondly, A sweet compellation given to the Church, *My Sister, my Spouse.*

Thirdly, Christ declareth the workes he doth, being come into his garden, receiveth the fruits, with acceptation to himselfe, *I have gathered my myrrhe with* my

my spices, I ate my honey-comb with my honey, I drinke my wine with my milke. Then

Fourthly, He inviteth others to the participation of this divine and magnificent banquet, in saying, *Eate O friends, drinke, yea drinke abundantly, O beloved.*

I am come into my garden, &c.

I am come, or, I have come : but the Hebrews often use the time passed for the time present, what is meant by garden, you have already heard in verse 14. and 16.

Now here is the gracious answer of Christ, that his Church can no sooner pray for his presence, but he saith, *I am come into my garden.* Now God is said to come into his garden, when he manifests his presence there : so the Lord is said to come downe to deliver his people out of *Egypt*, that is, by the manifesting of power and wisdom in their deliverie, *Exod. 3. 7, 8.* and so the Lord is said to come downe to see the Tower of *Babel*, *Gen. 11. 5.* that is, he came in a manifestation of his judgement upon it : So here when he saith, *I am come into my garden*, it is his manifesting of himselfe in grace and acceptation, to make sweet discoveries of himself, in the communication of all good things, in keeping of a heavenly banquet of divine dainties, wherein he expresses his own delight, and the comfort and blessing of the Spoule. Now in that these words are in answer to the prayer of the Church in the former verse,

Observe,

That God answers the desires of his owne Spirit in his Saints.

God doth sometimes heare, and answer the natural desires

desires of men, that pray or crie to him as creatures, as the Niniuites, and the Children, and Beasts of that Citie: for out of his mercie and goodnesse, he makes his Sun to shine upon the just and unjust. How much more will he answer the voice of his owne spirit, when it shal prepare the heart to pray, as it is in Psa. 10.

17. Thou hast heard the desire of the humble, thou wilt prepare their hearts, thou wilt make thine care to heare. So in Rom. 8. 26. The spirit helpeth our infirmities; for wee know not what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit it self maketh intercession for us, with groanings that cannot be uttered: that is, wee of our selves know not what to aske, but the spirit reveales to us the will of God, by its sweet manifestation of God, which cannot so well be uttered by the flesh: and the Spirit maketh intercession according to the will of God, or according to God: (as the Greeke hath it) and so asking, According to his will, he heareth us, 1 Joh. 5. 14.

Againe, In that Christ is thus ready to come into his garden, in a larger manifestation of love and grace then before, and that upon the Churches invitation.

Hence observe, Secondly.

That Christ doth more and more manifest himselfe to be present with his people, upon their desires after him.

The Lord hath been alwayes present with his people in some appearance or other: the Arke, Tabernacle, and Temple were all signes of his presence: but his glorious presence in the flesh of Christ did exceed all the former shadows; and after Christs departure, he is present by the returns of his spirit, and this presence hath with it, life, light, comfort, strength and all. Thus the Lord doth reveale himselfe, from grace,

to grace, from glorie, to glorie.

Lastly, In that he saith, I am come into my garden he declares how much delight he takes to appeare in his Saints, and make his Tabernacle with men.

Hence observe, Thirdly.

That Christ taketh pleasure in manifesting of himselfe in his Saints.

A man taketh much delight and pleasure in walking in his garden: so doth Christ in making out of his presence in his garden of the Church: wee have many scriptures tending this way, as it is written, The Lord loveth the gates of Zion, above all the inhabitants of Jacob, glorious things are spoken of thee, O thou Citie of God, Psal. 78. 1. 2. 3. And The Lord hath chosen Sion, and loved to dwell in it, this is my rest, for ever, here will I dwell, for I have delight therein, Psal. 134. 13. 14. Again, Mount Zion lying Northward, is faire in situation, it is the joy of the whole earth, and the Citie of the great King, Psal. 48. 23. And as God taketh delight there, so must men also, because God is there. David saith, He shall lead me into the pathes of life, in his presence is fulness of joy, at his right hand is pleasure for evermore, Psal. 16. 11. Now followeth the description of the Church, and the sweet compellation which Christ giveth her.

My Sister, my Spouse.

Here is both affinitie, and consanguinitie, all the nearest bonds of relation, that may binde Christ and his Spouse fast together. This hath been spoken of already in the 9. verse of this Chapter, and therefore I shall not stand on it now: only thus much, this sheweth the excellencie of the Spouse, in that she is neerly

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ly related unto Christ, that she is his Sister by blood. (as I may so speake) having one nature, one Spirit, and one father; hence it is, Christ saith to his Disciples, *I go to my Father, and to your Father, to my God and to your God.* Joh. 20. 17. Christ became our Brother by incarnation, *bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh.* And we are made his Brethren by adoption, having received of the same Spirit with him, crying, *Abba Father*: Hence it is, *he is not ashamed to call us Brethren,* Heb. 1. For we are with him, *made partakers of the divine nature,* 2 Pet. 1. 4. And againe, by marriage wee are his Spouse, and that by gift of the Father, and also by his owne consent: so that there is a sweet conjunction and union, a sweet intercourse of love and communion betweene Christ and the Spouse: so that by this mysticall union, and sweet communion, Christ is to his Spouse a friend, a head, a Brother, and a Husband. So much for the compellation.

Now followeth the actions of Christ, being come into his garden.

I have gathered my myrrhe with my Spice, I have eaten my honey-comb with my honey, I have dranke my wine with my milk.

The Spouse before intreated Christ to come into his garden, and eate his pleasant fruit: he accordingly comes in, even to her desire, and did not only feast on the Churches provision, but also brought more with him.

I have gathered my myrrhe with my Spice, &c.

For myrrhe, it was one of the chiefe spices (as you have heard) used in the composition of the sweet

ointments; *Exod. 30. 23.* with such ointments they used to annoint their friends at feasts; this was more largely expounded in Ch. 4. verse 13.

With my spice, that is; with my other spices; or aromaticall fruits, meaning all the severall fruits of the spirit, which are all sweetened by an influence from the Spirit: As in nature there is one common influence from heaven; but yet variety of flowers and sweet spices in their severall kinde, with a different kinde of sweetness: so all graces have their originall from a common influence of Christs spirit, though they differ one from another, and are all accepted of God, from whence they come.

I have eaten my honey-comb, &c.

The word & doctrine of Christ, which flow from his Spirit, are likned to *honey*, and the *honey-comb*, to *wine* and *milke*, *Psal. 19. 11.* and *119. 103.* *Isa. 5. 51.* *1 Pet. 2. 2.* for as *milke* and *honey* nourish and strengthen, and wine increaseth spirits: so the doctrine of the Gospel, the spirit of Christ, and the sence of his love, is far more comfortable and sweeter to the soule. Under these severall sorts he meaneth still, the sweet, pleasant, and profitable fruits that the Church did yeild unto him, declaring thereby, that he did most favourably accept his owne graces in his Spouse, and that he was much delighted therewith, yea, more then any man is, or can be in gathering most sweet and smelling hearbs and spices, or in eating honey, yea, though he eate it so greedily, that he doe withall devoure the combe, or in drinking the best wine and purest milke.

Hence observe.

First, That God accepts of his owne graces in his Saints, and delights in them.

God

God must needs accept of such graces that are his owne, and delight in such services that come from love. God first accepts of Christ, and then of us, and what comes from us in him. The Apostle willeth us, *To offer up our selves a holy and acceptable sacrifice to God, Rom. 12. 1.* God doth not only accept, but he delights in the graces of his Spouse; hence it is he comes with new supplies of grace, enlarging his love and benefits, as it is in *Matth. 25. 29. To him that hath shall be given.* And in *Rev. 22. 12. I come, and my reward is with me.* Christ never comes into the soule, but he brings rewards with him, of the increasings of those graces that were in the soule before. Thus we see that Christ upon the desire of the Spouse doth come unto her, with acceptation of the fruits of his owne spirit in her, and with new increasings thereof.

Secondly, Observe.

That Christ doth accept of, delight in, and increase the least of his owne graces in the Saints.

All the graces of the Spouse, though never so little or small are accepted, not only her honey, but her honey-comb: not only her wine but her milke; her weake services as well as her strong, because the spirit flowing from Christ unto her, sweeteneth all. Christ doth extol his owne grace, *O woman! great is thy faith, Matth. 15. 28.*

Now followeth Christs invitation of others unto this banquet, in these words.

Eate O friends, drinke, yea, drinke abundantly, O Beloved.

In these words Christ speaketh, as at a Feast, cheering

cheering up his friends, as partaker with him of all those divine graces, and fruits of the spirit before mentioned. Christ is the Master of this heavenly banquet, and it is he that here cheereth up his guests. It was the custome of the Jewes to poure ointment on their guests, to shew their welcome, and cheere them up: So Christ doth poure out the ointment of his grace and spirit, to welcome and cheere up his Saints, as appeares in these words, *Eate O friends, &c.*

Hence Observe.

That there is a mutual feasting between Christ and his people.
 Christ provides a heavenly banquet of all spirituall dainties, *Of fat things, and the marrow of fatnesse, wine, and wine on the Leer, Isa. 25. 6.* and then calls his Saints (as his friends) to partake of those dainties. Christ is the fountaine, streaming it selfe forth, to refresh the Citie of God.

Secondly Observe.

That Christ doth abundantly satisfie his people with all good things. *Eate, yea, drinke abundantly, &c.* that is, be ye plenteously filled with my grace and spirit; no man goeth hungry from a feast: in Christ there is not only abundance, but a redundancy and overflowing of all good things; Christ is able, yea is willing to doe for us farre more abundantly then wee are able to thinke or speake, *Ephes. 3. 20.* Christ doth not bestow some small measure of grace, life, peace, &c. on his people, but he gives it in abundance. It followeth.

O friends, O beloved!

Christ out of the abundance of his affections doth multiply new titles for his Spouse, calling her, *friend, and beloved.* They that doe his commandements, are his

his friends, *Job. 15. 14.* Abraham is called the friend of God, *Iſa. 41. 8.* friendship is the sweetneſſe and ſtrength of love, therefore he addeth, *O beloved!* ſo plentifull and kind hearted is the Lord, that he cannot keep his joy within himſelfe, but ſtirreth up his friends and companions, to eat, and drinke, and rejoyce with him. Thoſe good things, that neither eye hath ſeene, nor eare heard, that are above our reach to conceive of, are for thoſe that love him, *1 Cor. 2. 9.* Now in that Chriſt doth invite his Spouſe to this heavenly banquet, by new Titles of love and friendship.

Hence Obſerve.

That there is ſweet love and friendship, between Chriſt and his Saints.

All kinds of love and friendship, meet in Chriſt towards his Spouſe, and ſo againe, in the Spouſe towards him, here is the friendship of all relations in the world, as of *husband, brother, friend, &c.* here is a free opening his boſome to the Saints, and they againe opening of their hearts to him. Here's mutuall delight in one anothers good and happineſſe: Chriſt is much delighted in all the good and hapineſſe of the Spouſe, and ſhe is as much delighted in the happineſſe and glorie of Chriſt. So much for the fourth Chapter.

GANT.

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of Christ. So much for the first Chapter.

CANTICLES.

CHAP. V.

VER S. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voyce of my Belovéd that knocketh, saying, open to me: my Sister, my Love, my Dove, my Undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.

I have put off my Coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my Feet, how shall I defile them?

My Belovéd put in his hand by the hole of the Door, and my bowells were moved for him.

I rose up to open to my Belovéd, and my hands dropped with Myrrhe, and my fingers with sweet smelling Myrrhe, upon the handles of the lock.

I opened to my Belovéd, but my Belovéd had withdrawne himselfe and was gone: My soule failed when he spake, I sought him, but I could not find him, I called him, but he gave me no answer,

The Watchmen that goe about the City, found me, they smote me, they wounded me: the keepers of the walls tooke away the Veile from me.



WEE had in the former Chapter almost nothing but the praises and commendations which Christ giveth to his Church: so highly, and with so many speeches doth he magnifie and extoll her beauty and her glory and excellency. Here in this Chapter

we have another manner of song, even an accusing and a bewailing Song: for here she accuseth her self, and bewaileth her owne unkindnesse and uncharitablenesse, which she shewed to her most kind and loving Spouse, reporting also the great affliction and calamity that came upon her by that meanes. And after all this, we have the meanes whereby she recovers her selfe againe.

In this Chapter observe two things.

First, a complaint of the Spouse, which she maketh, accusing her selfe for some negligences towards her beloved, and this is contained in the six first Verses. Wherein also there are two especiall matters delivered unto us.

First, an open acknowledgment of her offence committed, Vers. 1, 2, 3, 4.

Secondly, a recitall of the miseries that fell upon her by meanes of her neglect, Vers. 5, 6.

The second thing set forth unto us in this Chapter, is, a familiar parly had betwene the Spouse, and such as were her friends and acquaintance, who demanding some questions of her, the Church instructeth them concerning the state, dwelling, and mutuall fellowship that is betwixt her and Christ. This matter beginneth at Vers. 7, and reacheth to the end of the Chapter. The questions with the answers thereto, concerne two things.

1. There is something demanded about Christ him selfe in Vers. 8. whereunto there is a large answer, beginning at the 9. Vers. and holdeth to the 15. wherein the Spouse doth set forth her beloved by many elegant expressions: the issue whereof was, that the daughters of *Jerusalem* became likewise enamour'd with

with him, and therefore question the place of his abode: the question being contained in Vers. 16. and the answer in the two last verses: the occasion both of the one, and of the other, was that vehement charge that the Spouse giveth her friends, in the seaventh verse, both concerning Christ himselfe, and the place where they should find him.

The first thing that offers it selfe to our consideration, is, the Churches complaint, accusing of her selfe, saying,

I sleep, but my heart waketh, &c.

Here is a description of the Churches temptation, which is worldly drowfinesse and security, whereinto the godly sometimes fall. She had enjoyed a comfortable intercourse with Christ, but now she falleth into a deep temptation, from the strength and prevalency of corruption.

Hence Observe in the generall.

That the Spouse is not alwayes in one and the same temper. It was not long agoe that the Spouse was in a sweet, lovely, gracious temper; and now on the suddaine shee falls into a fit of droufinesse and security. Thus it was with *Abraham*, sometimes strong in faith, and sometimes fearfull, as when he denied his wife. *David* was sometimes full of confidence and boldnesse, triumphing in the Lord, saying, *Whom shall I feare?* And sometimes againe, *I shall one day fall by the hand of Saul.* So *Peter*, sometimes confident, and againe, sometimes overcome with feare. But to come to the words in particuler.

I sleep, but my heart waketh.

The words containe,

1. A Confession, *I sleep.*

2. An acknowledgement; *But my heart waketh.*

These words declare a two-fold condition of the Spouse. The one is a sleepey, drowzie estate, which proceedeth from the flesh and unregenerate part: the other, a waking or watchfull condition, which proceedeth from the spirit of Christ within her.

I sleep, or *I sleeping*, as it is in the Originall: these are the words of the Spouse, declaring what befell her in the night season while she slept. The sleep of the body is a deadning and benumbing of the outward senses, insomuch that it is the very image of death, and it is dangerous, because when man sleepeth, his enemy watcheth, as in the parable of the seed, *When the husbandman slept, the envious man sowed Tares*, Matth. 13. 25.

Now we must consider here three things especially.

1. What this sleep is.

2. Whence it proceedeth.

3. What the effects thereof be.

1. We cannot understand this of a bodily or naturall sleep; for the Spouse is considered according to her heavenly and spirituall birth, and therefore must needs be meant of a spirituall slumber, even a drousinesse in the heart and minde, touching Heavenly things.

2. As naturall sleep proceedeth from wearinesse, and want of spirits, or from sloathfullnesse and want of exercise: so spirituall sleep ariseth from want of exercise in spirituall things, and from a spirituall weariness.

wearinesse that comes from the too much expence of the strength of the soule upon matters of the world. So that spirituall slumber is from the fleshly part, and the remnants of the old man remaining in the godly. *The flesh* (saith the Apostle) *lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit is against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that yee cannot doe the things that yee would,* Gal. 5. 17. When the flesh doth much prevaile, then there is a damping of the spirituall graces, even as it were a slumber that falleth upon the mind.

3. The effects of sleep is deadnesse and darknesse; men when they sleep love to be in the darke: there is also a cessation of joy and delight, of all activity and the like: so in a Christians spirituall sleep, faith hath not its full and lively operation, love sheweth not her zeale and heate, the joy and activity of the soule is much decayed, &c.

Now though sleep be often meant in Scripture in a good sence, for the repose and rest that the Saints have in God, *Psal.* 3. 5, & *Psal.* 4. 8. yet here, and in many other places, it signifieth neglect of holinesse, and spirituall security and drowsinesse; as in *Isa.* 56. 10. & *Rom.* 13. 11. *1 Thess.* 5. 6, 7. This sleep proceedeth from affliction, or wearinesse, as in *Luke* 22. 45. *Isa.* 5. 27. The Spouse having eaten, and dranke largely of Christs dainties, begins to be negligent, being pressed thereunto by the remnants of the flesh, she gave place to this carnall ease and drowsinesse.

Hence Observe,

First, *That the Spouse of Christ is ingenuous to lay open her owne defects.* We have large examples of this in *David*, and *Paul* with many other eminent persons in Scripture. Herein the Saints yield unto God his chiefe

chiefe prerogatives, as the honour of his power and authority over us; his wisdom in knowing our secrets, and his mercy in sparing of us, and the like.

Secondly Observe,

That the Spouse of Christ may sometimes fall into a spirituall languor. Sometimes weaknesse and drowlinesse may overtake the most eminent Saints; as Solomon, David, Peter, and the rest. The flesh that is alwayes opposed to the spirit, may sometimes for a season prevaile, as to sleepinesse and distemper. And this the Apostle testifieth in *Rom. 7. 14.* when he saith, *The Law is spirituall, but I am carnall, sold under sin.* That is, the Law requires a heavenly life and disposition: *Ent I am carnall,* in part, or in regard of the remainders of flesh that are in me: so that the godly themselves in respect of some weaknesse that is yet remaining in them, may be called *carnall: sold under sin,* not willingly, but as one that is yet detained, though his ransom be paid.

But we must note here, that the Spouse was not in such a dead sleep, as that she was without any life or stirring at all; though there be flesh opposing the spirit, yet there is spirit opposing the flesh; and therefore she doth not onely confesse her defect, but also acknowledge her life and excellency, by adding,

Ent my heart waketh.

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Vigilavit,
excitatus
fuit.

My heart waketh) or watcheth: that is, is lively and active still: meaning thereby, that howsoever she was overtaken in the outward man, or corruption of flesh, and of the members thereof, yet she could not but in her heart and spirituall affections, thinke upon her head and Spouse.

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The heart is taken for the whole soule, for the understanding, will, memory, and affections: so it includeth all the powers of the soule. The Apostle calleth it the *inward man*, the spirit, or regenerate man, opposed to the flesh or outward man, *Rom. 2. 28, 29.* This flesh and spirit lusteth one against another, even in the Saints, as the Apostle saith, *Gal. 5. 17.* And when the spirit is willing the flesh is weak, *Mat. 26. 41.* So then, in that the Spouse saith, *My heart waketh*, it signified, that though she had given her selfe to fleshly ease and security, yet her heart and spirit was otherwise disposed. The heart is the last part which liveth and moveth in the body, and in it life and sense first beginneth, and therefore it is the most principal part, it is like *Primum mobile inter sphaeras*, the first spheare celestiall which is moved, and by it others are moved: it is like the Sunne among the Planets, which by its lustre giveth light unto the rest: it is like the Center from which the lines are first defixed and derived from it to the circumference, all the lines being deduced are of equall distance. But here by the heart is not understood the substance, but the quality of the heart; where David saith, *Create in me a new heart*, *Psal. 51. 10.* We must not understand it of the substance, for that is still the same, but the quality of the heart, with its integrity. But now the Church maketh a difference between her selfe and her heart, as if her selfe and her heart were not the same, where she saith, *I sleep*, she speaketh in the person of her outward man, of the flesh, not of the spirit: but where she speaketh of her heart she speaketh of her inward man, there was readinesse of spirit.

Hence

Hence Observe. First,

That there is an antithesis or contrariety betwene the flesh and the spirit, in the Saints. The Saints have a fleshly backwardnesse, but there is still a readinesse of spirit, but the outward man, which is flesh, perisheth, but the inward man that is spirit, is renewed day by day. So the Apostle comparing himselfe with himselfe is not himselfe, where he saith, *I am carnall, sold under sin: for in me, (that is in my flesh) there dwelleth no good, but I allow not that which I doe. I find a law in my members rebelling against the law of my mind.* There the flesh sleepeth, *But to will is present with me, and I delight in the Law of God,* there is the inward man, or the spirit waking. Secondly Observe,

That the Saints cannot fall from grace. Though they sleep, yet their heart is awake. The work of the new birth, or Spirit, can never be quite put out, or extinguished. The Saints may many times fall into great security, but yet the heart waketh, there remaineth somewhat within, the sleep is not deadly. The Prophet *Isaiah* speaking of the Church and Saints of God, saith, *It shall be as a Tree, as an Oake, whose substance is in them when they cast their leaves,* Isa. 6. 13. This is also testified by the Apostle *John*, where he saith, *Whoever is borne of God, sinneth not, for his seed remaineth in him, neither can he sin, because he is borne of God,* 1 John 3. 9. So that here is still life in the root, *The seed remains in them;* from whence it is, that when the Spouse sleepeth, her heart waketh: and from hence it is, that she cannot lose the worke of God in her, that she is borne of God, who is immortall and unchangeable. And it is written, *Every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth, that it may beare more fruit,* John 15. No fruitfull branch shall be cut off. Third.

Thirdly Observe,

That the Saints should as well acknowledge that which is good, as that which is evill in their spirits. It is common with some Christians to be ever complaining of that evill they see in themselves, but very seldome acknowledge any of that good they have received: whereas we ought to acknowledge all the good we have received, to the praise of the giver.

Fourthly Observe,

That a Christian is what he is in spirit. A believer is not to value himself according to what he is in the outward man, or in the flesh, but as he is in the inward man, or spirit. So the Church values her selfe by the disposition and temper of her spirit. *My heart waketh*, thus hath the Spouse in few words set forth her estate, according to flesh and spirit: and now she setteth forth in the next place the great care and love of Christ, who seeketh to awake, and to raise her out of this dangerous sleep, in these words.

It is the voyce of my beloved that knocketh, saying, open to me my Sister, my Love, my Dove, my Unde-filed: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.

In the former part of the verse we heard of the Churches security of the flesh, where she saith, *I sleep*, and yet she was not in such a dead sleep but her heart awoke, her delight in Christ was not utterly lost. It was like the sleep of the wise Virgins, which slumbered as well as the foolish virgins, yet had their Lamps trimmed, and Oyle in them, which the foolish had not. Now Christ commeth to her to awake her by knocking: she notwithstanding her drowsinesse was

sensible of all his sweet words and allurements, where-
by he pressed her to open unto him, saying, *Open to
me my Sister, my love, my Dove, my undefiled,* which is
set forth by the sufferings of Christ in waiting for her
returne, *For my head is filled with dew, and my locks with
the drops of the night.* All which aggravates her negli-
gence, and his patience in waiting for admission into
her heart by his spirit.

In the words observe two things.

1. The Churches discerning of Christs voyce.
2. Christs carriage towards his Church.

First, the Churches discerning of Christs voyce, set
downe in these words, *It is the voyce of my beloved.*

Secondly, we have Christs carriage towards his
Church; which is amplified.

1. By a friendly compellation, *My Love, my Dove,
my undefiled.*
2. By his action, *He knocks, &c.*
3. By his suffering unworthy things for her sake,
*For my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops
of the night.*

It is the voyce of my beloved that knocks, &c.

Christ useth good meanes to awaken his Spouse,
and to raise her up from that carnall security she was
in, and therefore he calleth her by his voyce, and he
no sooner speaks, but she heareth it, saying, *It is the
voyce of my beloved, &c.* She speaks as if it were one
that being waked out of sleep and slumber, should say,
that it was such, or such a one, that called, or spake.
Many being so well acquainted with men, that they
can certainly, as it were, discern them by their
words.

Hence.

Hence Observe.

That the Saints may discern Christs voyce, even in a sleepe condition. Here the Spouse, though she was sleepey and drouse, yet her heart was so far awake, that she discerned Christs voyce. Christs Sheep are said, *To heare Christs voyce*, John 10. And *to tast words by the eare*, as it is said, *Job 12. 11.* they have a spirituall tast and relish with them. The voyce of Christ is spirit and life, and hath in it, a self-discovering property, it carries along with it, its owne evidence: it hath such majesty and power, such evidence and life in it, that the Spouse cannot but heare and discern it, even in a sleepey and slumbring temper.

Secondly Observe,

That no temptation that befalls the Spouse can separate her affections from Christ. She acknowledges Christ to be her Beloved still, there remained so much conjugall amity and friendship, though she was untoward, sleepey, and drouse, that with a Spouse-like affection she saith, *It is the voyce of my beloved.* So that take a Saint at the worst condition, when he is a sleep, he loves Christ, and lets out the streames of his affections towards him. Thus much for the Churches taking notice of Christs voyce: we come to Christs carriage towards her, which is set forth, first, by his action, *He knocketh, &c.*

It is the voyce of my beloved that knocketh, saying, open unto me, &c.

That knocketh, or, that beateth: the word in the Hebrew signifies to *knock*, or *beat vehemently*, to be very earnest, or *provoking*. In generall, it is taken for any knocking, but here, for knocking at the *door*. This

A a a 2

doth

ΠΒΓ
Pulsavit,
impetum
fecit. The
Septu.
transl. it by
καταδωνω
Urge, and
by προω
Pullo.

doth intimate Christs earnestnesse for an entrance, to come in and awake his Spouse. And thus Christ is said to knock at the doore of the Church of *Laodicea*, Revel. 3. 19, 20. Christ hath severall kinds of knockings, as that of his word, his mercy, his Spirit, and sometimes his Rod, *Mic.* 6. 9. yea, all the meanes that Christ useth to draw us nearer to himselfe, as his works, spirit, word, and the conscience too, these are the knockings of Christ at our hearts. Now Christ doth not onely knock, but he is most earnest for an entrance, saying,

Open unto me.

Here the heart is compared to the gates or doors of a City; for as in Cities, the strength of the City is in the gates, there was their seats of justice in those days, and there was Munition stored up for war, so that to open the gates to an enemy, and you give him all. So when Christ hath the heart, he hath the whole man. The heart is the way of entrance of God into the soul, or into the whole man, and hence it is said, *The Lord opened the heart of Lydia*, Acts 16. 14. That was it, at which Christ knocked. When God bestoweth his blessings on us, he is said to *open doors unto us*, as in *Psa.* 78. 23, 24. & in *Isa.* 45. 1, 2, 3. The Apostle calleth the grace of ministry, *The doore of utterance*, Col. 4. 3. So when we yield unto Christ, and his Spirit, and accept of his grace, and the like, it is to open the doore unto him, as in *Revel.* 3. 20. Now the knockings of Christ shew how earnest he is of entrance into his Spouse, saying *open unto me, &c.*

Hence Observe,

That Christ desires a neerer and neerer fellowship with his Spouse.

Hence

Hence it is, that he knocks for a farther entrance and communion, he had communion before, but he comes to renew and enlarge it. Christ doth not delight in strangeness, but makes forth abundance of love to the soules of his Saints, that so he might have a further entrance into their hearts and affections. You know what he sayes to the Church of *Lapdicea*; *Revel. 3. 20. Behold I stand at the doore and knock. So here, It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, &c.*

But some may object, Christ hath power to open to himselfe, why doth he stand knocking, man hath no power to open of himselfe, &c.

The answer is.

First, Here Christ speakes to the Spouse, that had the spirit of God, by which she could open to her beloved: for the Saints are first acted by the Spirit, and then they act by it, not in their owne power; but in the power of the spirit. But

Secondly, When Christ comes for an entrance at conversion: then there goes a power, that shall open: for his knockings are effectually: his words are operative words, such as was in the creation, *Let there be light, and there was light, Genes. 1. 3.* And such where-with he raised *Lazarus*, saying, *Come forth of the grave, &c. Joh 11. 43.* So Christ by his Spirit, cloathes his words with majestie, and power, *his words are spirit and life*, and when he speakes effectually, he opens and unlocks the heart with the power of his voice.

Now followeth the particular compellations, which are as so many motives Christ useth to move and stirre the affections of his Spouse.

Open to me my Sister my love, my dove, my undefiled.

These things are spoken after the manner of earthly lovers, who come in the night season some times to visit their friends, and provoke them as it were by faire speeches, to open unto them when they knock, to which end Christ useth these alluring titles, saying, *My Sister, my Love, &c.*

My Sister.

Christ is our elder Brother, and the first borne of many Brethren, and what neerer bond of consanguinitie, than a Sister? So that whatsoever is strong in any bond, Christ knits us to him by it: and therefore styles himselfe in all the sweetest relations, to shew that he hath the love of all relations towards his Spouse. Will a Sister shut a Brother out of doores, and that when a Brother comes to visit her, and to shew kindnesse unto her? Thus Christ comes to make out his love unto us, calling us by the name of Sister. See this more expounded in Chap. 4. 9.

My love.

Christ loves all his creatures with a generall love, and lets the beames of his goodnesse scatter out to them, because there is some beames of his excellency in every creature; but his Spouse is his beloved in a more peculiar and eminent way then any other: and though the beames of his generall love, are scattered out to all his creatures, yet his especiall love is united and fixed only upon his Church. See this more largely opened in Chap. 1. 9. Christ cannot but love what he sees of himselfe in us, he loves his owne Image,

Image. It followeth.

My Dove.

The Church is resembled to a *Dove*, in respect of the disposition that is or should be in her, resembling that creature. A Dove is of a meeke disposition, without guile, faithfull to her Mate, and of neat and cleant feeding, and the like. So the Saints are called *The meek of the earth*, Zeph. 2. 1. 2. And are accounted to be without fraud, or duplicitie in the soule, Jam. 1. 8. *They are faithfull and follow the Lamb, whithersoever he goeth, they have not defiled themselves with women*, Revel. 14. 4. And they feed upon Christ, and spirituall things. In these, and many more things, there is an apt resemblance betwixt a Christian and a Dove. But this hath been largely spoken of in Chap. 2. 14.

My undefiled.

Some reade it *my perfect one*. The Hebrew word signifies most properly, and most commonly *perfect*, and *sound*, of a religious, honest, and simple disposition, without guile or wickednesse. The Greeke translate it *unfained*. This word *undefiled* is an expression of Christ, which he applies to his Church. But now in this expression we are to consider Christ and his Spouse: the Spouse having the field, she hath the Pearl also: having Christ, she hath his righteousness and perfection: so the Spouse is perfect and compleat in her head, there being a neere conjunction between the head and the Members. Againe, the spouse is undefiled in respect of that disposition in her, which tends to perfection: and Christ respects her according to what she shall be in her perfection and glorie.

New

כִּנּוּן
Integer,
perfectus
corpore vel
animo, abso-
lutus, com-
pletus, con-
summat.
Græcis.
ἀμωμῶς
& ἀκωμῶν.
10.

Now in that Christ comes thus to awak his Church and by such sweet words to perswade her, alledging the unitie of her nature, which is, she is *his sister*, her fellowship with him, she is *his love*; her chastitie, she is *his Dove*, her sinceritie, she is *his undefiled*: and all these sweet words are to melt the heart of the Spouse.

Hence Observe.

That Christ useth all the sweetest words and actions in drawing his Spouse neere to himselfe.

Here he useth (as it were) all heavenly Rhetorick; to perswade and move the affections of the Spouse. Thus Christ drawes his Spouse by the bands of love, calling of her by the name of *love, Dove, undefiled*: making out his love to her in the sweetest Titles, and tearmes of relation; yea, notwithstanding her infirmitie and droufinesse (before mentioned) she is highly esteemed of him, he imputes not her sins unto her, but lookes upon her graces, which he hath endued her withall, as if she were perfect and undefiled.

It followeth.

For my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.

In these words wee have declared the patience and sufferings of Christ, which he under went, in waiting for the retume of his Spouse. The reason why he would have the doore opened, and be let in is, because he had refused no hardship or incommoditie, but undertooke all for the good of his Spouse, as appeares, in that he saith:

For my head is full of dew, &c.

The head of Christ being filled with dew, seemeth to
meane

meane his manifold troubles and calamities, which he suffered for her sake, which sufferings of his are of two sorts: *In himselfe, in his people*: In his owne person, what did he endure? how hid he undergoe the contradictions of sinners, while he was upon earth? and at his death, his head was not only filled with drops of dew, but also with drops of blood, besides the anguish of his Spirit, by losing the sense of his fathers love. And then what he suffers in his Members, who are often *Troubled on every side, perplexed, persecuted, cast down, always bearing about in body, the dying of the Lord Jesus*, See 2 Cor. 4. 3, 9, 10. Thus Christ commeth in the darke night to awake his Spouse, and communicate good things unto her: the cold dewes of the night, especially in those hot Countries, were neither good nor wholesome for the people.

It's added.

And my locks with the drops of the night.

Christ being described as a *Nazarite*, whose head might not be shaven, is said to have the cold drops of the night upon his head. *Drops* signifie afflictions and troubles. *Amos* 6. 11. Some understand here by the *dew and raine*, the spirituall blessing wherewith Christ doth enrich his Church, as he promised (in *Hos.* 14. 5.) *to be, as dew upon Israel, &c.* But I rather understand by the *dew, and drops*, the sufferings of Christ, as afore-said, noting chiefly one thing, *viz.* that Christ stood as a watchman, and that not one night, but many, waiting to have entrance, and could have none, and yet stands it out, until the drops of the night fall upon his locks.

Bb bb

Hence

Hence observe.

That Christ doth exercise abundance of patience in bringing home people to himselfe.

How patient hath Christ been towards many of us in waiting for our conversion? And how long doth he wait for the giving up our soules to him. It is said, *That Christ by his spirit preached in the dayes of Noah, to the foules now in prison*; 1 Pet. 3. 19. He waited then a hundred and twenty yeares, upon the old world. Now marke how unkinde and undutifull the Spoule shewed her selfe; for she doth ingeniously confesse against her selfe; she was warme in the bed of security, and carnall ease, she was very loath to arise out of it, therefore she maketh these excules.

VER. 2.

I have put off my Coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them.

THe Spoule doth here acknowledge, that notwithstanding all the former sweet drawings of Christ, yet she drawes back, and that upon some ground of pretence, *I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on, &c.* As if she had said: I have put off my garments and apparell, and am ready as it were to go to bed, and therefore, *how should I put it on?* there is no reason I should doe so now. *I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?* I will not come upon the foul ground to defile my feet, that I have so cleansed, neither is there any reason, seeing they are cleane already, that they should be defiled againe. Both the
fimi-

Similitudes tend to one purpose, viz. to expresse the
 deniell of the Spouse in opening to Christ, and to let
 him in, for everlast. they that be undressed are loath to
 put on their clothes againe till the morning, that
 they must needs rise, and as they that have washed
 their feet, are unwilling to soule them, and many
 times alledge these things for excuses, that so they
 may with the more safety meete their Saviour: even
 so doth the Spouse here. This is a metaphor taken from
 those that are going to bed, and are loath to rise for a
 ny mans pleasure; and the meaning may be this, that
 she had now shaken off many feares and troubles, she
 was free from persecution, and delivered from many
 afflictions and miseries: fondly she endured, she had
 now throwne off those things, as she going to bed
 doth his garments; she had washed them off, as in
 the Eastern countries, travellers wash their feet
 off the soile of the way, when they come to their rest,
 and she was now in the use of fleshly joys, and worldly
 pleasures, loath to direct her selfe, loath to
 rise and be pincht with cold againe, loath to set her
 feet into the fire of former sufferings, though in her
 heart she professed Christ above all; yet so sweet
 were those earthly recomendations, that she would re-
 taine thoseare intercourse with him for a while, then
 lose her share in those fleshly enjoyments. Here she
 saith, how shall I put it on? that is, I cannot put it on,
 without trouble and vexation of my flesh. The
 like phrase God useth in Hos. 11. 8. How shall I give
 thee up, Ephraim, &c. how shall I make thee as Admah,
 &c. that is, I cannot destroy thee, as I did other Ci-
 ties, that rebelled against me, such is my comiserati-

on and pittie towards thee. Now such are the worst
 left excuses, that our flesh doth alledge, the time is
 unreasonable, the night is cold, the weather way, so
 that we cannot arise to embrace Christ without
 much trouble and rebustation of the flesh. *flum yda*

Those that understand by putting off her garments,
 the renouncing of the old man, and by washing of her
 feet, the sanctification of her affections, are much mi-
 staken, for the more she hid of either the one or the
 other, the nearer she was to Christ, and the more
 soone she might have entertained him, but the true
 naturall sense is as before. In sum, she meaneth, that
 she reason'd to stirre in her heart, and that her faith
 did greatly waver, yet, that her owne weaknesse did so
 farre prevail with her, as not only to thinke, but to
 say, that she could not without some paine of cla-
 thing herselfe againe, or without some hurt by the
 cold, if she came without her apparel, or without
 some discommoditie of following her faire fear, as she
 thought, rise up, and to open the doores, and let Christ
 in: yea, unwise, as she was, then more esteemed so
 small a discommoditie, in doing and executing of her
 duty, then the unspeakable pleasures she might have
 had by Christ, who willingly for her sake, had en-
 dured upon him many inconveniencies, and suffer-
 ings.

Hence, Observe.

That a great hindrance of our communion with
 Christ is, the fesse pretences, reasons, and excuses of the
 flesh.

The flesh never wants excuses and pretences, there
 was never any sinfull course, but the flesh would seem

to iustifie it by one reason or other. Thus the friend answereth (in Luke 11. 7.) *Trouble me not, the doore is now shut, and my Children are now with me in bed, I cannot rise and give thee.* Therefore as it is good to know the truths of God, as they are revealed in Jesus, so it is also to know the falseneſſe and deceitfullneſſe of our owne fleshly and carnall spirits, they are both mysterious almost alike, hard to be knowne. It is true, God made man right, but since the fall he hath sought out many inventions. Carnall wit serves the carnall will, and carnall lusts never want an advocate to plead for them, namely, carnall reason. *There is a Lyon in the way* (saith the sluggard) *a Lyon is in the streets,* Prov. 26. 3. *And the sluggard will not plough by reason of the cold,* Prov. 20. 4. So the people that dwelt in their seiled houses, said, *The time is not come that the Lords house should be built,* Hag. 1. 4. Such kind of shifting there is in lost man, since the fall, having lost the image of God in holy wisdom and knowledge. Corrupt courses never want fleshly excuses. Hence it is, Paul saith, *I consulted not with flesh and blood,* that is, he consulted not with the reasonings of the flesh, and the carnall will, but was obedient to the heavenly revelation. Thus Peter consulted with the flesh, when he counselled Christ, saying, *Master pity thy selfe.* Now therefore we should arme our selves with resolution, and say with Christ, *Get thee behind me Satan,* &c. Mat. 16. 23. And with Paul, when he saith, *We are no more debtors to the flesh,* &c. Rom. 8. as if he had said, we owe nothing to the flesh, as to yield obedience and subjection unto it.

But we shall now see in the next Verse, what becomes of all those excuses, and backwardnesse of the

Spouse,

Spouse, whereby she delays and puts off Christ.

VERS. 3. 4.

My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the doore, and my bowells were moved for him.

I rose to open to my beloved, &c.

IN these and the 3. following Verses, we have the issue of the Spouses negligence, that Christ absented and withdrew himselfe. There are three things set downe of what befell the Spouse.

1. Christs withdrawing of himselfe, he leaveth her for a time to her selfe, and to her owne wayes; But it is said, *My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the doore*, Christ did not wholly leave his Spouse though he did withdraw: and therefore,

2. We have Christs gracious dealing with her, not wholly withdrawing himselfe, but *puts his finger in the hole of the doore*, and thereby leaves some sweetness behind him before his departure, So that her hands dropped downe Myrrhe, &c.

3. The successle of Christs departure, and withdrawing of himselfe, *Her bowells were moved in her*, which were hard before, whereupon she opened to her beloved, as now being willing to receive him, but he is not at her call ready to be found, he was gone and past, not indeed, but according to her sence and feeling, and that onely for a time. After this, like one that falleth into a swoone, she is void of inward comfort and sence of Christs presence, where she saith, *My soul failed when he spake*, that is, when I remembered the words which he did speake.

And lastly, she cannot find her beloved, she then enquires

enquires of the Watch-men of the City, but she receiveth no comfort from them, but they are like *Jobs* friends, of whom it is said, *Cold comforters are you all*, *Job 16. 2.* for they wound her conscience, and disgracefully use her, where it is said, *They tooke away her Veile from her.* So in her present apprehension, she passeth all meanes of recovery, yet in the following verses, she doth recover her selfe againe, because Christ left her not wholly, but leaves some of his sweetnesse behind him before he departed from her.

My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the doore.

The Spouse is no sooner fallen into this spirituall languor and drowsinesse, making excuses for her sloath and security, but Christ comes to rouse her up, and that first by withdrawing himselfe after a sort from her, but yet he will first leave that behind him, that shall both raise her up to seek after him, and support her in her afflictions. *My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the doore, &c.*

My beloved put in or, (as it is in the Hebrew) *sent his hand*, or, *put it forth*: the putting forth of the hand usually signifies the effecting of some work; as in *Gen. 3. 22.* & *12. 10.* Hereby is noted, that Christ had some enterprize on the Spouse, he was not willing she should be at ease in her fleshly and carnall condition.

His hand, that is, his spirit, by which he moved upon her, by which he went to awake her. For as the finger of God (in *Luke 11. 20.*) meaneth the Spirit of God, so doth his *Hand*. Hence it is said, that when the Spirit of the Lord went out with the ministry of the Disciples, *The hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed, and turned to the Lord, Acts 11. 19.*

So

מִשְׁתָּה
Mist, emi-
st, demist,
immitse.

So in that it is said, Christ put in his hand it's meant he did inwardly move up in her heart, by the free and secret operation of his glorious Spirit.

In at the hole or, *downe by the hole*, to wit, of the doore, as it's added in our Translation. The similitude is taken from hence, when a doore is locked, yet there is a key-hole at which one may put in his hand, or look in, and so here, when the hearts of the faithfull be after a sort locked up, and Christ standeth at the doore of the heart, and calleth, and knocketh, yet they doe not open unto him, but make excuses, he findeth some little entrance or hole, as through the doore, to put in his hand of spirit, to touch the inward parts of the heart; that so he might leave some print of his fingers before he did depart.

Hence Observe,

That Christ never leaves his Sponse so, but that he leaves some prints of his spirit and grace behind him, upon her soul. Hence it is, the soule doth so linger after him, when he hath withdrawne himselfe, and never rests untill it finds him againe. There is never a finall desertion, as we see here. Christ puts his hand in at the doore, he leaves some inward workings of his gracious spirit, to quicken the soule to seek after him, and also to support it in its affliction. Christ stands at the doore and leaves Myrrhe behind him, something in the heart that causeth a restlesse longing after Christ, as appears by that which followeth this touch of his Spirit.

And my bowells were moved for him.

Some read the words thus, *My heart was affectioned toward him.* Master Ainsworth thus, *My bowells made a troubled noise, or sounded within me.* Whereby is meant,

meant, that all the inward affections and powers of the mind, are moved with griefe and sorrow. Now she is grieved and displeased with her selfe, now she lamenteth her owne folly, that she was so undutifull towards her beloved, now her heart is againe wrapt with love of him, now she will entertaine him. Hereby is signified then all her disquietnesse and sorrow of heart for her beloved, whom she had so neglected, and put from her, when he desired to come in. Thus the Prophet declares his sorrow, by saying, *My bowells, my bowells, I am pained at my very heart, my heart maketh a noise, I cannot hold my peace,* Jer. 4. 19. And so God himselfe, in pity of Ebraims calamity, saith, *My bowells sounded (or were troubled) for him, I will surely have mercy on him,* saith the Lord, Jer. 31. 20. So here, the Spouse, by the sounding of her bowells, sheweth the griefe and sorrow of her heart, her mourning and languishing after her beloved.

Hence Observe,

First, *That the power of Christs Spirit makes a great change in those into whom it comes.* Behold here the power of the Spirit, what an alteration it makes in men, how far it changeth them from that which they were before: downe goeth the power of the flesh where it commeth. An example of it you may see in the Apostles of Christ: how weake and how fearfull were they at Christs sufferings, but after the holy Ghost came downe upon them in the day of Pentecost, of a company of weake and trembling Lambs, they became so many mighty Lyons, they feared not the whole world. So it is with all Saints, they be heavy, and lumpish and dull, when the flesh hath the stroke, and beareth the sway, every small impediment

in a hinderance, and ministreth some excuse to keep them back, and the excuses seem also to be reasonable, but when the touch of the holy Spirit cometh, that Christ put in his hand at the hole of the doore, then there is a quicknesse, a life and moving, then nothing can let, but they will seeke Christ. It is a wonderful change and alteration that the Lord makes in man, when he putteth downe the flesh, and raigneth himselfe by the power of his Spirit. We remaine dull, slow, fearfull, weake and negligent, because we rely in our owne power so much, and in the power of the spirit so little.

Object. But some will say, Doth not Christ dwell alwayes in the hearts of his people? How then is it said that Christ knocketh to have them open unto him, and let him in, and they make excuses to put him off? Or how is it that he toucheth them with his spirit now, which they had before?

Answer. We must note, that there be degrees of the measure of the gifts of the Spirit. The Apostles had the spirit before Christs ascension, but not in that measure as afterward: so, also Christ dwelleth in all the Saints; even in those that have the least sparke of true light, but he knocketh to have them open the doore of their hearts wider, and to receive him after a more full manner. And thus we have the Psalmist saying, Lift up your head, yee gates, and be ye lifting up everlasting doores, and the King of glory shall come in, Psal. 24. we must let our hearts wide open, that Christ may come in, and reigne over us, and wholly sway us by the Scepter of his Spirit.

Secondly Observe,

That Christ never so deserts his spouse, but leaves some thing

thing behind him which makes her sensible of his absence, and restless in her desires after him. Hence the Spouse is troubled in spirit, sorrow and calamity presently fell upon her, when she saith, *My bowels were moved within.* That is, my heart was affectioned towards him, all my inward affections and powers of my mind were moved with griefe and sorrow, I was restless in my spirit after him, nothing in the world would content me but the enjoyment of my beloved, and communion with him, whom once I enjoyed with unspeakable delight. These, and such like affections was the Spouse moved withall. The Spouse is not only affected inwardly in her mind, but she is also stirred up to seeke after her beloved, as appears in the following verse.

VERS. 4.

I rose to open to my beloved, and my hands dropped with Myrrhe, and my fingers with sweet smelling Myrrhe, upon the handles of the doore.

THe Spouse stayeth not in bare motions of the mind (as many have some touch off, but they vanish againe) but she ariseth to open the doore unto her beloved. It is not now grievous to her to put on her Coat, and to put her feet into the dirt, being quickned by the Spirit of Christ.

In this Verse we have,

First, a gracious action of the Spouse, she *ariseth to open to her beloved.*

Secondly, the grace that followeth this action, *her fingers drop pure Myrrhe, &c.*

I rose up to open, &c. or, I my selfe rose up. She is no more negligent and sluggish, but active and stir-

ring to open to her beloved: she acts now, because she is acted by the Spirit of Christ.

Hence Observe,

That the Saints are very active for Christ, when they are in the power of the Spirit. It is like the Spouse had much stirring with flesh and blood before, but she was unable to arise and open to her beloved, till she moved in the strength of the Spirit of Christ. Christ tells his Disciples, *The flesh is weak, but the spirit is (strong) and willing.* Nothing but the power of the spirit can make us open our hearts wide for Christ the King of glory to come in. In the next words she magnifieth the graces of her beloved, saying,

And my hands dropped with Myrrhe, and my fingers with sweet smelling Myrrhe, upon the handles of the lock.

She could touch nothing with her hands, nor lay her fingers upon nothing, where he had put in his hand, but all did drop with Myrrhe, even with pure Myrrhe: for her meaning is this, that her beloved did but put in his hand, and yet he had left even by his touch, such abundance of sweet graces, that whereforever she toucheth, her hands drop with the same.

My hands dropped Myrrhe, or, the Oyle of Myrrhe, which distilleth out of the Myrrhe tree. What Myrrhe is, hath been shewed before in Chap. 1. 13. She meaneth, that Christ left such a plentiful and pleasant smell behind him, that even she coming after his departure, had such abundance of it, as if she had such store of Myrrhe, as would have made her hands to drop.

And my fingers with sweet smelling Myrrhe, or, passing Myrrhe,

myrrhe, that is, *thin* and *pure myrrhe*, that is, more fragrant and sweet: *by this passing* or *pure myrrhe*, is commended the excellency of Christs graces, as that be- fore the abundance of them. This seemes to denote the sweet odour of her services, that her longing and seeking after her beloved was acceptable with the Lord, and of sweet smell in his no- strils; for by her hands wee may understand her holy actions, anointed with the oyle of myrrhe, that is, the spirit of Christ, as the holy in the Sanctuaries was made of pure myrrhe, which did prefigure the same, Exod. 30. 23. or wee may understand it of the grace of Christ, which he left behinde him, as a sweet odour, to draw her to himselfe, when he put in his hand at the hole of the doore, which she is now sensible of.

Open the handles of the lock, that is, those fleshly locks or barres, which kept out Christ from entering, which are now beaten downe by the power of the spirit, and of those diuine anointings of Christ, her heart being anointed by Christ, all those barres of opposition, that the flesh with all its reason and wisdom, are now beaten down and subdued: so that Christ may freely enter and come in, and take the whole command of all the affections of the soule, and reigne as Lord and King: this is the vertue and power of the Spirit.

Hence Observe.

First, *That the Spirit and its graces, are very sweet and fragrant.*

They are pleasant and sweet, and therefore compared here to myrrhe. The graces and prayers of the Saints are said to be sweet, as it is, *Revel. 8. 4.* Christ minglcth

mingled them with his owne sweet odours, and to perfume them before his Father. *The wicked are abomination to the Lord*, because he abhors them, their services, and whatsoever in them is: *but, the righteous man is his delight*, *Prov. 15. 8.* Christ will burne up sinne, and consume all the drosse of his Saints, and accept that which is sweet of his owne Spirit in them. All the actions of the flesh are nothing but finall workes, but the actions wrought by the hand of Christ, the finger of God, and power of Spirit: these actions are sweet, holy, and glorious.

Secondly Observe.

That the sweetnesse of the Saints proceeds from Christs sweetnesse.

Christ first leaves myrrhe, and the fingers of the Spouse drop myrrhe. *He was anointed with the oyle of gladnesse above his fellows*: and out of the fulnesse of his divine anointings we receive, & grace for grace. The head being anointed, the oyle ranne downe to the skirts of *Aarons* garment, wee have all from our head, grace for his grace, love for his love, priviledge for his priviledge, he is a sonne, so are wee sonnes, we are heires of heaven, as he is heire of God, all his dignities, offices, priviledges, graces, and preferments are ours: So that looke whatsoever grace or priviledge is in the head, it descends downe to the Members, who share with the head in every vertue; so that all our graces are from his grace, our life from his life, our myrrhe from his myrrhe.

It followeth in the next verse.

VERS. 5.

I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had withdrawne himselfe, and was gone: my soule failed when he spake: I sought him, but I could not finde him, I called him, but he gave me no answer.

Here wee see the troubles and sorrows which befall the Spouse, because of her former negligence and surpris, Christ will not let her lye asleep on her bed of ease, but will come to awaken her.

In the verse wee have

First, The action of the Spouse, *I opened to my be-*

Secondly, The discouragements of the Spouse, and

Thirdly, Christ's leaving of her, *My beloved had withdrawne himselfe.*

Secondly, Her inward griefe and sorrow, *My soule failed, &c.*

Thirdly, She had no answer, notwithstanding all her seeking: *I sought him but he gave me no answer, &c.*

I opened, or, *I my selfe opened to my beloved*, as before, this noteth a further degree of grace in the Spouse, that she did not only rise up, but opened the doore, giveth up the strength and power of heart and affections unto him, willing that the everlasting King of glory should come in, and reigne there.

Hence Observe.

That gracious affections, produce gracious actions.

Where there is the truth of affection, it will discover it selfe in holy action: after her affections were moved, she presently openeth to her beloved: The will, minde and understanding, guide the outward man.

man; therefore if these be touched and wrought upon, it will quickly appeare in outward action: as soone as her bowels were moved, and that her fingers dropt myrthe, she shews the truth of her affection in opening unto, and making after her beloved.

Thus much for the action of the Spouse; her discouragements follow.

But my beloved had withdrawne himselfe.

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Transfuit.

Withdrawne, or, passed away; to wit, secretly and quietly, particularly also, putting up the great injurie, of refusal, that shee had offered him, *passed by,* to wit, the doores and so went away. The doubling of the complaint for his departure, sheweth her passion and griefe, in that she thought he had been at the doore, when she opened, but now he was gone, she could not enjoy his presence and favour, as formerly she had, to her unspeakeable comfort. This is strange, that he calleth and knocketh, when she was asleep and lay in her bed, and now when she is risen out of her bed, and openeth the doore to let him in, he withdraweth himselfe, and will not be seene; her unkinde dealing did deserve this.

Hence Observe.

That Christ doth sometimes withdraw himselfe from his Saints, according to their sense and apprehension.

So God did withdraw from Christ, when he cryed out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* but yet at that time, God was neere him, and did uphold him by his power: and so for the Saints, such desertions as these, proceed from love from him that doth withdraw himselfe: he doth it of purpose for their good, and that out of a singular love: but seeing Christ doth dwell in the Saints, how can it be said, that he

doth withdraw himselfe out of their sight, especially when he hath made their hands to drop with myrrhe? This is out of question, that Christ is alwayes present in the souls of the faithfull, and yet to their thinking and apprehension he seemeth to be absent. He doth still support them by his power and spirit, and yet they have not the lively and comfortable feeling of his presence which they desire, and sometimes happily did enjoy. Then the heart is troubled, then they mourne, then they seeke and call after him, for shee saith.

My soule failed when he spake.

My soule went forth, or it left me and was gone, it failed, and fainted within me, I was as one without life, even as one dead through teare and griefe. The departure of the soule from the body is death, she was now as it were, in a swoone, or halfe dead for the time. Alas, now shee is afraid that her unkinde dealing should cause him to forsake her. Who is able to expresse the griefe and sorrow the godly soule hath, when it seeketh to feele the consolation of Christ, and he hideth his face. True it is, that the Spouse could not lament, she could not open the doore, seeking and calling after him, unlesse he were present, and did worke these things in her; for, all these things proceed from his grace, but yet he doth seeme to be absent; which makes her crye out, my soule, my strength, my life, my comfort is departed from me.

When he spake.

When he spake, or, while he was speaking, or, rather because of his Speech to me which I had neglected: for, however the Hebrew will beare both, yet I thinke the latter, most agreeable with the purpose of the Spouse,

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which

which is to aggravate her offence, and also to shew the miseries that she fell into for so great neglect: So the sentence is, *My soule failed, because of speech, or, for the words, which he had used, when he so lovingly called unto me, as before in verse 2. saying, Open unto me my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled, for my head is full of dew, &c.* Now when the Spirit had moved upon her heart and affections, then she remembered the words of her beloved.

Hence Observe, First.

That Christ's words makes after impressions in the hearts of the Saints, though they seeme to be lost at the first.

Christ's words are that immortall seed, that will never dye, but live and grow, and be effectuell. This word will be effectuell through the Spirit. Christ spake many things to his Disciples, which they forgot, but when the Spirit, that comforter was come, it brought those things to their remembrance againe, *John. 14. 26.* The seed that is sowne in the Saints, perhaps will not grow up presently; but it shall afterwards grow and revive againe, as the Corne.

Secondly, Observe.

That Christ is so much withdrawne in the soules apprehension, that it even failes because of his absence.

So it was with the Church in *Lam. 3. 1.* Thus it was often with David. The soule that is spirituall will be in a swoone, and deliquium, upon Christ's withdrawing, if God looke with an angrie countenance upon the soule, it causeth the Spirits to faile. If any one hath a friend, on whom he had much dependence, to see his countenance withdrawne, and not to shew his face as before, it will daunt and dismay such a one; much more will the soule be dismayed, when Christ

Christ shall withdraw his pleasant face. It followeth.
*I sought him, but I could not finde him, I called him,
but he gave me no answer.*

Now the Spouse is in great perplexity, and distresse of minde, because of her former negligence, in that she refused to open to her beloved, when he knocked for entrance. This is one of the greatest temptations, that God seemeth not to heare the prayers of his people; when he *shutteth out their prayer*, as it is, *Lam. 3. 8.* But the Spouse here receiveth like, for like of Christ, because she would not hearken, she also calleth, and hath no answer.

But this seems to contradict other Scriptures, which promise, that those that seeke shall finde. It is true, they that seeke shall finde, but not presently, but by degrees: nay in some sort, *he is found before he is sought*, for he is in the soule, to stirre up desires of seeking him; he breathes in desires into us, and answers us before we pray, when he prepares the heart, and heares the prayer, as the Psalmist speaketh: therefore it is a spirituall deceit, when wee thinke Christ is not in us, and we are neglected of him, when he breathes in desires after him into our soules.

Hence Observe.

That when the soule earnestly breathes and seekes after Christ, and seemeth not to finde him, yet Christ is in that soule.

Christ did not enter so fully into his Spouse at once, that she doth perceive it, and yet in the end she findeth, that he is come into his garden: she findeth, that her rising out of her sleep, and from her bed, her opening the doore, seeking and calling after him, was not in vaine. *Jonas*, in his greatest distresse, when he

sayd, *I am cast out of thy presence, (yet he saith) notwithstanding I will looke toward thy holy Temple, Jon. 2.* And David, in Psal. 31. 22. *I said in my hart I am cast out of thy sight, yet notwithstanding thou heardest the voice of my prayer.* And afterwards he saith, it was in his hart, that he thought God had cast him off, he was surprised on a sudden, *I said it is my infirmity,* saith he, in Psal. 73. many seeke, and because they find not, even according to their desire at the first, they faint and give over; but wee must know, that where there is any seeking or breathing after him, Christ is there, and will make himself manifest at the last. And now to the last verse which I did reade.

VERS. 6.

The watchmen that went about the Citie found me, they smote me, they wounded me; the keepers of the wall tooke away my vaile from me.

THere is contained in this verse, the third calamity of the Church, viz. that Christ her head being absent from her, and shee labouring to seeke him, falleth into sundrie dangers and distresses: yea, all become noysome and hurtfull unto her, even those that should have kept and preserved her, from all violence and injurie, they did abuse and beat her, yea, cruelly wound her, and deale fraudulently with her, as the particular shew.

The injuries that the Spouse did here undergoe are two.

First, *She is beaten and wounded.*

Secondly, *Her vaile is taken from her.*

The instruments of her affliction are described to be,

First, *The watchmen of the Citie.*

Secondly, *The keepers of the wall.*

The...

The Watchmen that went about the City found me, &c.

These watchmen are said to be such as goe about the City, which noteth their painfullnesse and diligence, as of those that watch and ward in the City day and night, meaning the officers of the Church, as before was noted, in Chap. 3. 3. where the selfe same thing is put downe, saving that there is no mention made of their abusing of her, but onely of her demand, who thereby could tell where he was that her soul loved. Now we have the carriage of these watchmen.

They smote me; they wounded me.

They smote me. That is, with reproaches and evill speeches; for smiting is sometimes with the Tongue, as in Jer. 18. 18. *Come let us smite him with the tongue.* To smite is to hurt or afflict by any meanes whatsoever; it's said of Christ in respect of his sufferings, that he was stricken, smitten, and afflicted of God, Isa. 53.

Now in that these watchmen smite the Spouse, they appeare more cruell and enraged then before, in Chap. 3. 3. neither doth the Church enquire of these watchmen after her beloved, but they find her seeking of Christ, out of their way and course, and therefore they abuse her, they discourage her, they take her as an evill doer, they deale injuriously with her. She addeth.

They wounded me.

In that she speaketh thus without a particle to joyne them (which manner of speech the Rhetoricians call *Asyndeton*) she doth it, both to shew her owne

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vehemeney, and the quick dispatch that these evill Watchmen made in so ill intreating of her: and therefore in that she addeth that word *wounding*, after smiting, she doth, as it were, by a gradation, paint out their wickednesse and her owne misery, because many may faint and be smitten, and yet not be wounded, for wounding is to draw blood, a further degree of hurt then smiting, as appears in 1 Kings 20. 37. where it is said, a certain man smote one of the Sons of the Prophets so, *that in smiting of him he wounded him*. So the husbandmen *wounded* the Lords servant. By the wounding of the Spouse is then meant the highest degree of afflicting of her, the worst dealing of the Watchmen with her.

It followeth.

The keepers of the wall tooke away my Vaile from me.
The keepers, or, the Watchmen of the walls, to wit such as had a continuall standing allowed them, both to scry the enemies, and to repell them also, if they came: neither the running watch, nor the standing watch favoured me, but both sorts cruelly intreated me. These Watchmen are meant the Ministers of the Church and City of God; for the Priests and Levites kept of old the watch or charge of the Lord, as appears in Num. 3. 7, 8. And it is said in Isa. 62. 6. *I have set Watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night, &c.* But these Watchmen here seems to be such as are spoken of in Isa. 56. 10. *Blind watchmen, and dumb dogs*, such as could doe nothing but rend and teare the flock of Christ.

Some understand by the Watchmen the Ministers of the Church, and by the keepers of the wall, *Magistrates*, such

such as are called Gods, Psal. 82. 6. And these many times direct the point of the sword against the Church. Ministers and Magistrates, when they are filled with envy and malice at the graces of the Spirit in the Saints, are both alike persecutors.

Now what it was that these watchmen performed against the Spouse, and what their carriage was towards her, is declared in the words following.

They tooke away the Vaile from me.

The Hebrew word here Translated Vaile, or Scarfe, hath its name of spreading, because women spread them over their heads to cover them: and it hath its signification also of thinnesse, because it was made of the finest and purest linnen that could be gotten. Such Vailes were worne of women in a double respect.

First, For ornament and adorning, as appears in Song. 23.

Secondly, In token of subjection and obedience, in this see Gen. 20. 16. Also Gen. 24. 65. 1 Cor. 11. 5, 6, 7.

Then, the taking away of the Veile notes 2. things.

1. As it was an ornament, as in the Old Testament, Vaile was that which covered women for modesty, but was an honourable Ornament. *They tooke away the Vaile.* That is, that wherewith the Spouse was covered; they tooke away that which made her comely, and laid her open, and as it were naked; by calumnies and reproaches, casting all the mire and dirt they could upon her. They tooke away the Vaile of the Spouse, when they tooke away her credit and esteem, when they lay open her infirmities and weaknesses. So she was spoiled of her good name, and reputation, and counted among the light and lewd

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lewd women, for so they used to deale with dishonest women, disfiguring their faces, stripping them out of their cloaths, and taking away their faire Jewells, as appears by Ezek. 23. 24; 26.

2. As the Vaile is a token of subjection, it is taken away when they draw the Spouse from Christ, and her subjection to him; by false doctrines and humane traditions and inventions of men, by pressing humane devices upon the Spouse, and so take her off from observing those things that Christ hath given her in trust to observe. Those that desire to sit high in the consciences of people, and so make them undutiful, they take away the Vaile of subjection from them, making them to observe humane traditions more than Christs Commandements.

Now in that the Spouse is thus vexed and afflicted by these evill watchmen, who were such as seemed to be in place of superintendency and ministry, such as pretended at least to have the greatest care of her, for these to smite her, wound her, and take away her Vaile: this was most savage dealing, and the very highest of persecution.

Hence Observe,

That those that seeme to be of great esteeme, and of the highest Office in the Church, prove many times the bitter enemies of the Church. Who were more bitter enemies in Christs time then the Scribes, Pharisees, and Priests? And who were the greatest enemies of the Church in the time of the Prophets, but false Priests and Prophets. The persecuting Magistrate pretends he is Gods stead, as they are called Gods, Psal. 82. 6. They should governe as God himselfe would governe; but alas, wofull experience tells us that they dee contra-

ry to the truth. As for Ministers, they call themselves the Embassadors of Christ; and therefore strengthen the feeble knees, and bind up the broken hearted, and the like: But alas, we see many of these turne the edge of the sword against the Saints. The Prophets of God doe complaine of the wicked Priests in the time of the Law, how they did afflict the godly: And may not the same complaint be made still? even now in the days of the Gospell, how are the Saints still vexed with many of that Tribe. What is the cause they be so much displeased? Surely because the Saints seeke after Christ, and that out of their way and order: they will beare any disorder saving that: men may be carnall, formall, yea, and profane too, and such are no trouble to their spirits; like the blind *Pharisees*, if there be any excesse of ryot, these watchmen can beare it well enough, but if any seeke acquaintance with Christ, and not in their way, that is intollerable, that is to their disgrace, upon such they fall, they beat and wound them; yea, *they take away their Vaile*: they doe deface and dishonour them all they can, for they make them as odious as they can; they terme them that be Saints, and seeke after Christ, *Hereticks, Scismaticks, Blasphemers*, and the like: they lay all the most vile reproaches upon them they can devise. Now for the Saints, this need not trouble them, when these things come to passe, that such as pretend to have office, and superintendency over the Church, doe beat, wound, and disgrace her. Did not the builders refuse Christ himselfe, the head corner stone? What marvaile then, though they beat his Servants and vex his people. How was Christ judged of the *Priests and Pharisees* in his time? And this hath been

the lot of the Church in all ages, the Saints were called Hereticks, and Schismaticks, the Vaile was taken off. O what cruelty is this? What savage men are these that thus beat and wound the Spouse of Christ? Yea, marke well how they be: They be the watchmen that pretend to be Ministers and Embassadors of Christ for to feed his flock, who of all others should chiefly defend and comfort them: now for these to beat and wound the Spouse, and take away her Vaile, this is intollerable wickednesse, this is the highest impiety.

To conclude, truth hath alwayes a scratcht face, falshood, and formality for the most part goe under glorious attire, as that of decency and uniformity, and the like. There is no question, that such as are carnall Formalists, Pharisaicall Professors, would persecute Christ if he were in the flesh, as now they persecute his image and spirit in his Saints, when they smite and wound and take away their Vaile from them. Thus much for this time.

VERS. 7, 8, 9, 10, &c. to the end of the Chapter.

I charge you, O daughters of Ierusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him that I am sick of love.

What is thy beloved more then another beloved, O thou fairest among women? What is thy beloved more then another beloved, that thou dost so charge us.

My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefeest among ten thousand.

His head is as the most fine Gold, &c.

IN the former part of the Chapter, we have heard how the Bridegroom calling and knocking to raise his

his Spouse out of her sleep, even from her carnall security, what excuses she made, how unkindly and uncharitably she dealt with him. Moreover we have heard how he for the same unkindnesse, did withdraw himselfe from her; she seeketh after him, and falleth into the hands of the watchmen, even into the hands of false Pastors, which dealt with her very cruelly, they beat her, they wounded her, and tooke away her Vaile from her. But what doth the Spouse now? Doth she give over seeking her beloved? No verily, she goeth on in her search still, and is more vehement then before: when she was under the power of the flesh, she thought it somewhat unreasonable to seeke after her beloved, and began to excuse her selfe, saying, *I have put off my Coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?* Christ seemeth to require that at her hands which was without all reason, but after he had touched her inwardly by his spirit, she doth not say, *I have sought him, and by seeking him have been beaten, wounded, and disgraced, how shall I seeke him any longer?* There is now a fire kindled in her which none can quench, the flesh now with all the excuses which it can make, is put to silence.

Hence Observe in the generall.

That the Saints doe never more prize Christ, nor seek after him with more affection, then in the time of hot persecution. The practise of the Spouse here doth plainly demonstrate this, beside all experience sheweth the same. It was to this purpose that Christ put in his hand at the hole of the door, & left that sweet myrrhe with which his fingers did drop. The truth is, that though Christ seemed to withdraw, and to absent himselfe from his

Spouse, yet by the inward workings of his spirit, by putting in his hand, he is very neer unto them, and doth by his wisdom, power, and goodnesse, exceedingly support and comfort them. Now let us descend downe to the particulars themselves. And first take a generall resolution of this latter part of the Chapter.

The Spouse having thus long sought her beloved, and not finding him, no not among the watchmen that should have given her best instruction; yet because of that never dying affection in her, she doth not let her beloved goe altogether, but still seeketh him, even among such friends as know him not so well as her selfe, as one that will refuse no meanes to find him. So at last by degrees, first uttering her earnest desire, and making diligent search after him, she findeth comfort in her selfe.

In these words we have therefore.

First, the Spouse enquiring among her acquaintance, for her beloved, *vers. 7.*

Secondly, they make answer, as if they knew him not, *vers. 8.*

Thirdly, she maketh unto them a description of him, how he might be knowne from other men. This description is made.

First, In generall, *My beloved is white and ruddy, &c. vers. 9.*

Secondly, She descends downe to that which is more particular, setting him forth by all the members and lineaments of his body; and doth set him forth (as we use to say) from top to toe, beginning at his head, which is the most eminent part of the body, saying, *His head is as most fine gold, &c. verse 10. &c. and so to*
verse.

verse 15, and so concludeth in a generall commendations of him, shewing that he was precious and amiable in his whole selfe; saying, *He is altogether lovely*, or, he is lovely in all parts, yea, *he is all over lovely*, he is wholly delectable, crying out with an exclamation? *This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.*

Fourthly, These Daughters of Jerusalem are inamored with Christ, as well as the Spouse herselfe, and desire to joyne with her in seeking him out, as appears in the following words, *Whither is thy beloved gone, that wee may seeke him with thee?*

Fifthly, and lastly, it was made knowne to her at length, where he is to be found: *My beloved is gone downe into his garden, &c.*

Now to the first verse that I read.

I charge you, O ye Daughters of Jerusalem, if yee finde my beloved, that yee tell him that I am sick of love.

In these words observe.

First, A charge given, *I charge you.*

Secondly, The Persons charged, *The daughters of Jerusalem.*

Thirdly, The particular thing wherewith they are charged, that is, if they find Christ, *to tell him, shee is sick of love.*

But first of the charge given.

I charge you

The Spouse having escaped the injurious watchmen, now meetteth with her friend, *The Daughters of Jerusalem*, layeth this weighty charge upon them, saying, *I charge you*, that is, *by oath*, or, *I adjure you*: that is, I lay a very strict and weighty charge on you, as it were by an Oath, which forme also the Spouse useth.

uſeth, both to teſtifie her unfeined love towards her head Chriſt, and to provoke them, with whom ſhe dealeth, to deale faithfully in doing her meſſage. Now from the charge, or manner of the ſpeech of the Spouſe, Obſerve.

That the Saints are reall and ſerious in their affections towards Jeſus Chriſt.

Here the Spouſe layes a weight upon the daughters of *Jeruſalem*, ſaying, *I charge you*, &c. She was very reall and cordiall in her affections, and in this weighty charge, ſhe doth but breath out by hearty expreſſions, what thoſe inward affections of her ſoule were. Thus much for the charge it ſelfe : The next thing is the parties charged.

O daughters of Jeruſalem.

The Spouſe was ill intreated of her enemies, as appeareth verſe 6. therefore now ſhe ſpeaketh unto her friends, looking to find favour and courteſie amongſt them : the daughters of *Jeruſalem* were her fellow-members, of whom wee have ſpoken of largely from chap. 2. 7. And alſo chap. 3. 5. Now this verſe being the beginning of the ſecond part of the Chapter, containing a dialogue between the Spouſe, and the damoſels or daughters of *Jeruſalem* ; which ſheweth that the Spouſe leaveth the watchmen, and enquires for her beloved among her owne friends, her owne Members.

Hence Obſerve.

That the Lord doth many times convey comfort and ſatisfaction to his people, by poore, weake, diſperſed inſtruments.

The Spouſe expected more help from theſe poore diſperſed daughters of *Jeruſalem*, her owne members, then

then from the watchmen of the walls. What comfort could the Saints receive from the false Priests and Prophets in the time of the Law? or, what satisfaction may the godly receive from the Scribes and Pharisees in Christs time? and as little may the Saints expect now from many, that pretend to the Office of Priesthood, or ministry. Surely, many a Saint knows by experience, that more satisfaction and comfort is to be had from many a poore dispised Member of their congregation, then from the great Rabbies and Doctors of the world: and no marvaile; for, *God ordaineth strength out of the mouthes of babes and sucklings.* Psal. 8. And he hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the things that are mighty: and the base things of the world, and things that are dispised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are. That *wee* flesh should glorie in his presence, 1 Cor. 1. 27, 28, 29. No fleshly nor carnall man shall boast in Gods light; and therefore by his wisdom and power he will overturne the wisdom and power of flesh: that his owne Spirit, wisdom, power, and righteousness might be exalted in his Saints. Now followeth the thing it selfe given the charge.

If yee finde my beloved, tell him that I am sick of love.

If yee finde my beloved, which sheweth they had but little knowledge of Christ, they had not the cleare manifestation of his love and favour; they apprehended him but darkely, being ignorant almost of him, as appears by their answer in the next verse.

Hence Observe.

That many Saints know but little of Christ.

Hence the Spouse saith here, if ye finde him, that is, if you come to a more cleare knowledge and revelati-

on

on of him : many Christians know Christ after the flesh, and after the letter, but how few know him after the Spirit ? many know Christ, as he is set forth in the historie of the Gospell, to be crucified and risen, but few know Christ found in them by the spirit. It followeth.

Tell ye him that I am sick of love.

Tell ye him, or, as it is in the Hebrew, *What shall ye tell him?* interrogatively, which he speaketh shortly, as many times lovers doe, and yet the interrogation containeth more vehemency in it, and serveth to beautifie the speech also: It is an earnest and passionate kind of speech, shewing her earnest affection after her beloved. Would you know what you should tell him? even that which followeth.

I but I am sick of love.

She cannot conceale the heat and vehemencie of her love, but even after the manner of lovers, declareth the same, who the more they be absent one of them from another, the more their love increaseth, and the more greatly doe they desire to be joyned together. The truth is, that the Spouse is so farre off from keeping close her love towards her beloved, that she doth not only reveale it to them, but intreatheth them rather freely to open it, and declare the same, especially to her beloved. *But what will ye tell him?* This demanding question, sheweth that her love did so appeare, that they must needs if they tell him anything, tell him:

That shee is sick of love.

The Greeke rendereth it, *wounded with love*: that is, with languishing desires after him. This is exceeding great love, that she commeth to be love-sick, as

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לומה
*Id est quid
indicabilis
ei.*

one ready to languish, and faint away, with love, here's a sicknesse, but not unto death, but unto life, a sicknesse that still bringeth comfort and satisfaction with it, a sicknesse that shall be cured with Christ, the great Physician.

Hence Observe.

First, *That true affections towards Christ, will desire enlargement from others.*

The Spouse here desireth these daughters to tell Christ of her affection towards him; to the end, that Christ might more and more discover his love and favour unto her. The Apostle desired that the *Thessoloni-ans* would pray for him, *That he might be delivered from unreasonable men,* 1 *Theff.* 3. 2.

Secondly, Observe.

That there is a distemper and inquietnesse in the affections of the Saints, in the want of the full enjoyment of Christ.

There is no contentment without union, and enjoyment, and the more excellent the thing is that is loved, the more contentment there is in communion with it, and where it is hindred in the least degree or measure, there is inquietnesse; such as is the contentment in injoying, such is the sorrow and sicknesse in parting. The greatest happinesse of the Spouse was in the injoyment of her beloved; and the greatest of her sorrow and sicknesse is in parting with him. But now if the flesh had borne sway, that would have reasoned after another way, as thus: I opened the doore, and he withdrew himselfe, and by that occasion I have suffered great calamitie, therefore I have small cause to love him: seeing he doth hide himselfe from me, and cause me to be thus stricken and wounded, why should I set my heart upon him? The flesh I say would

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minister such kinde of reasons, but the Saints are not led by the flesh and its wilddome, but by the Spirit which teacheth them, the more they suffer for Christ, the more to love him. This is a thing beyond the reach of humane reason, the Spouse having fallen into so great affliction by seeking after her head Christ, is thereupon sick of love. The Saints rejoyce in tribulation, and count it their honour to suffer for Christ, and the more they suffer in his name, he doth so strengthen them, and worke in them by the Spirit, that the more they love him. Thus having heard what the Spouse saith to the daughters of Jerusalem, let us now see what answer they doe make.

VERS. 8.

What is thy beloved more then another beloved, O thou fairest among women? What is thy beloved more then another beloved, that thou dost so charge us.

THE same words of well beloved, are repeated againe and againe, to shew, that the stronger is love. But by the answer of the daughters of Jerusalem, in which they seemed not yet to know Christ fully, as is apparent by their answer, for instead of giving satisfaction to her, they reply with asking new questions, saying, *What is thy beloved more then another beloved, &c.*

In this answer here are two parts.

First, A sweet and loving compellation, *O thou fairest among women.*

Secondly, The question is doubled, *What is thy beloved, more then another beloved? And againe, What is thy beloved, &c. that thou dost so charge us?* As if these Daughters

Daughters had sayd, there is some great matter in it; there is some excellency superhumane, that thou layest such a charge upon us, that thou dost so enquire after him.

But first of the compellation.

O thou fairest among women.

The Spouse is the fairest among women in the judgement of Christ himselfe, so he calls her, *O thou fairest among women*, Cant. 1. 8. And here the fellow-Members of the Church, terme her so too, *faire*, and the fairest, yea, incomparable *faire*.

Hence Observe.

That the Spouse is surpassing faire and beautifull, not only in the eyes of Christ, but also in the judgement of her own members, and that in the time of her greatest perplexities and sorrows.

Here the Spouse, though persecuted and abused by wicked watchmen, who beate her, wounded her, and tooke away her vaille from her, is notwithstanding discerned, and acknowledged to be faire and glorious, by such as are the faithfull of Jesus Christ. Thus Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches, then the treasures of Egypt, Heb. 11. 26. And the Thessalonians received the Gospell, with joy, though in much affliction, 1 Thess. 1. 6. It was because they saw greater glorie, and riches in Christ, then evill in all afflictions whatsoever. And though the Spouse may be in great affliction and miserie, yet her glorie doth farre surmount that, so that she appears to the godly, to be the fairest of all, though under much trouble and persecution. Afflictions doe make base and contemptible to the outward view: but the beautie of the Spouse is not outward in things of this life, but in spirituall ornaments, and

naments, which are not diminished or dimmed by afflictions, but doe then indeed shine brightest of all for the times of the greatest persecutions, when the Saints are imprisoned, racked, and tormented: you shall behold their stedfast faith and patience, their contempt of the world, with many other vertues: for which the daughters of *Jerusalem*, even the weaker sort, which are not as yet fully come to Christ, doe commend the Spouse to be *the fairest among women*: and indeed the Church cannot be otherwise then *faire*, and the *fairest*, being cloathed with the Sun, as it is in *Revel. 12.* that is, being cloathed with Christ, as Christ was cloathed with the glorie of the Father: in respect of which, *All flesh is as grasse, and as the flower of the grasse, Isa. 40. 6.* that is, a worldly excellency is as the flower of the grasse, that withereth and fadeth away: but the spirit, life, and glorie of God, which is the Churches clothing remaines and abideth for ever. Thus much for the compellation. Now to the question.

What is thy beloved more then another beloved? what is thy beloved, more then another beloved, that thou dost so charge us?

Here is a question, and a question answered by a question, wherein the Daughters of *Jerusalem* seeme to be as much inquisitive after Christ, as the Spouse herselfe. They double the question, for the more vehemencie, as also for the strangenesse of the matter.

What is thy beloved more then another; to wit, any other Gods: for, when Christ is preached, the wicked take occasion to crie up and magnifie other Gods. But the Saints desire to be informed further in the truth, and to know the difference between Christ and false Christs, between Christ and Antichrist, as appears in *Acts 18. 19. 34. &c.*

What is thy beloved more then another beloved, that thou dost

doest so charge us? Viz. So hardly, and straightly, & even as it were, by vertue of an Oath: Something there is in the matter that thou layest so hard a burthen, and straight charge upon us, or else thou wouldest not doe it. This is the first question moved to the Church, concerning the person of her beloved, they marvelling, as it were, what excellency should be in him, that she should so highly esteem of him, by occasion of which demand she entereth into a notable description of Christ, as in the verses following. These words being somewhat plaine, need no further explication; but let us take notice of some Observations from them. First Observe,

That the earnest seeking of the faithfull after Christ, is a meanes to stir up others to inquire what he is, or what there is in him. Common reason will lead men thus far, when they see that no threatnings, no affliction, bonds, tortures nor sufferings whatsoever, can prevaile, but that the Saints doe become more earnest in seeking Christ; to say within themselves, it's out of question there is some great thing that carrieth these men, it's no small benefit for which they will endure all these things. Hereupon these daughters begin to inquire what Christ is, *What is thy beloved more then another beloved, &c.* What is he more excellent then others, that are called Gods? Surely ther is some excellency super-humane in him. *That thou doest so charge us:* What an excellent thing is it therefore to be earnest in seeking after Jesus Christ? O it winneth souls to enter into the consideration, what Christ is, and what excellencies there be in him, when they see that others be bent, and cannot by no meanes be driven back from seeking after him. And therefore know, that whosoever he be, though meane in the world, that with earnest-

earnestnesse and meeknesse doth seeke the Lord, he shall be a meane to win others to the seeking of him also.

Secondly Observe,
 That many that professe Christ know but little of him. What is thy beloved more then another beloved? Wherein doth he excell other Lords, that the men of the world doe trust in? By this answer, the daughters of Jerusalem seemed to know little of Christ. It is true, that David saith, God is knowne in Judah, and his name is great in Israel, for in Salem is his Tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Zion, Psal. 77. 1, 2. yet he is not sufficiently known among some in Judah, as he should be, but he ought yet to be better knowne in Judah, and his name to be greater in Israel. I confesse many Christians know Christ in the History and letter of the Gospell, many know him after the flesh, but how few know Christ after the Spirit? How few know the dying, resurrection, and ascension of Christ in them? Many know Christ dying upon the Crosse, without them, but how few know Christ within them. Truly I feare, that in many Congregations where the name of Christ is professed, there be such ignorant ones among them, which like the Athenians, erect an Altar to the unknowne God, as we read, Acts 17. 23. That is, take upon them to worship God whom they know not. But O Christians! This is not your work, to goe on in blind devotion, but to be strengthened by the Spirit of God in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that being rooted and grounded in him, may be able to comprehend with all Saints, what is the breadth, length, height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that they may be filled with all the fullnesse of God, as the Apo-

file saith to the *Ephesians*, Chap. 3. 16, 17, 18, 19.

Thirdly Observe,

That it is an excellent thing for Saints to conferre one with another. The excellency of holy conference is seen here in the Spouse, comming to the *Daughters of Jerusalem*, speaking of her beloved, and telling them, that she was *sick of love*, &c. upon this the daughters of *Jerusal.* grow very inquisitive to know more of Christ, till at length they begin to be warmed and kindled with the consideration of his excellency. This demand of the Spouse, *I charge you, if ye find my beloved, to tell him that I am sick of love*, breeds questions in the daughters of *Jerusalem*, *what is thy beloved*, &c. whence upon the description of her beloved, their hearts are kindled and enflamed with love to Christ, and they become earnest seekers of him. Thus it was with the Disciples, when they were in a damp for the losse of Christ, after he comes and meets them, and opens the things of the Kingdome of God unto them, *Their hearts begun to burne within them*, Luke 24. 32. We should be very inquisitive after Christ, his wayes, his Kingdome: questions many times end in resolutions: the soul rests and injoyes in satisfaction. Thus much for the answer of the daughters of *Jerusalem*, which was by way of question or demand, *What is thy beloved more then another beloved?* &c. Now followeth the description which the Spouse makes of her beloved; and first in generall, she describes him thus.

VERS. 9.

My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefe among ten thousand.

The Spouse in her reply to the Daughters of *Jerusalem*,

lem, maketh a lively description of Christ.

First, before we enter upon the particulars, we may consider in generall, how she setteth forth here the riches, the dignity, the glory and beauty of Christ. When the *daughters of Jerusalem*, are so inquisitive for to know him: she describeth him at large, to the end that it may appeare there is good cause to move so earnestly after him, and that it might be known what a rich Jewell they obtaine, that doe find him. So that indeed, notwithstanding her great distraction of mind, her speeches are still godly, and her whole communication is nothing else but a kind of Sermon, or preaching of the goodnesse, merit, and worthinelle of Jesus Christ.

Hence Observe in the generall.

That no persecution can silence the Spouse, so as to hinder and keepe her back from publishing and declaring the glory, and the praise of her wel-beloved. It is an usuall thing for the world to storme, to gnash their teeth, yea, to fret, and rage, when Christ is laid open in the rich treasures of his grace and glory; yet for all their fury and rage, the Saints will not be silent, but describe him and lay him forth in his highest glory and excellency. Then however the Spouse was persecuted and abused by the watchmen, she proceeds to set forth her beloved, saying,

My beloved is white and ruddy, &c.

First, the Spouse describes her beloved in generall, saying, *My beloved is white and ruddy, &c.*

Secondly, she sets him forth in particular, and doth enumerate and reckon up all his parts, from top to toe (as we use to say) setting him forth by all the members

members of his body, as the following verses shew.

In generall she describes Christ two wayes.

1. Positively, *My beloved is white and ruddy.*
2. Comparatively, *The chiefe among ten thousand.*

My beloved is white and ruddy, &c.

The Spouse describeth Christ unto the daughters of *Jerusalem*, by his surpassing beauty and comeliness, to the end, she may attract and draw forth, both her owne affections, and theirs also after him. Christ is here set forth, as a goodly young man, whose image is pourtrayed by his visible qualities, his colours, and by the members of his body. But this is not meant of the aspect and face, of the outward lineaments and proportion of his body: although his comeliness in that behalfe need not to be doubted of: but of his spirituall beauty and gracefulness.

My beloved is white and ruddy, saith she, the mixture of these two colours makes a beautifull and good complexion. *White* and *red*, as they shew the best temperature in man, so here it may denote in Christ his divine nature, and his humane nature: for *white* is like the appearance of God, as we may see in the Vision in *Dan. 7. 9.* he appeared all white as snow, and pure as fine wooll. And man had his name *Adam*, of *Adamah*, the red mould of the Earth, out of which he was taken, *Gen. 2. 7.* Christ is called the second *Adam*, *1 Cor. 15. 45.* And was partaker of our flesh and blood, *Heb. 2. 14.*

Or, we may understand by Christs whitenesse, his righteousness and innocency, as he was without spot, without sin, being the immaculate Lamb, free from all defilements: And thus the Saints are said to be

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cloathed

Candidus
rubundus,
Christus es-
se perhibe-
tur, quia
nullum om-
nino pecca-
tum faciens
iustitiae ple-
nitudinem
ex integro
tenuit, &
tamen, tan-
quam pecca-
tor esset, ad
moriis pas-
sionem ac-
cessit.
Greg. in
Cant. 5.

cloathed in *white rayment*, which is their *righteousnesse*, Revel. 19. 14. So that these words may allude to the Prophets description of the *Nazarite*, whom, that he may figure the glory of Christ, he describeth him to be *more white then milke, more pure then snow, more ruddy then the Carbuncle, more orient then the Saphire*, Lam. 4. 7. By which outward beauty is understood inward holiness. And then by his *rednesse* we may understand his bloody sufferings, for we are said to be washed and cleansed by his blood, as the Apostle *John* saith, *The blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin*, 1 John 1.

Againe lastly, we may understand by his *whitenesse*, his administrations, and then it denotes his grace, mercy, meeknesse, and patience, he is very mild and gentle in all his wayes. And likewise by his *rednesse* his vengeance and justice on his enemies: for he is said to have his *Garments dipt in blood*, Isa. 63. 1, 2. Now this temperament, and mingling of *white* and *red* after such a mysticall manner in Christ, denotes his surpassing beauty, makes him of high account to his Saints, and enflames their affections to embrace him, and follow him; for these two colours together doe shew a right excellent constitution of body, and also a very perfect beauty. This ruddy or sanguine complexion is commended in *David*, 1 Sam. 16. 12. And both these colours of *white* and *red* are joyned together, the *whitenesse* maketh the *rednesse* more fresh and faire, and the *rednesse* discerneth the *whitenesse* from palenesse offace, or flegmatick complexion: both which colours, if they concur in any earthly creature, especially such as be young, make the same to be most of all liked: how much more then should they, considered spiritually in Christ (in respect

respect of whom all earthly things are but a shadow) not onely be excellent in him, but draw us to be enamoured with him.

Hence Observe,

That Christ is one in whom is rare beauty. The Psalmist describes him to be so, when he says, *Thou art fairer then the Children of Adam*, Psal. 45. 3. The Apostles beheld his glory as the onely begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, John 1. 16. By the onely begotten is meant, he that came from the bosome of God, with the glory of the Father upon him. And Christ in his glory had *his face shining as the Sun*, Mat. 17. 2. For he was full of his Fathers glory, *In him dwelt all the fullnesse of the God-head bodily*, Col. 2. 9. It was God appeared gloriously in our flesh, shining forth in his glorious beams through his Sonne: So that Christ is glorious by the indwellings of God, by his righteousness, wisdom, power, goodnesse, glorious in all his offices and administration, dealing in much meeknesse and gentlenesse with his people, and in as great justice and wrath with his enemies. Thus Christ is described positively to be all glorious and faire, in that it is said he is *white and ruddy*. It followeth, that his glory is farther set forth, comparatively.

The chiefe among ten thousand.

As Christ is glorious and excellent, so he doth excell all others, all creatures whatsoever, even men and Angells, and therefore she saith, *He is the chiefe of ten thousand*: Or, as the words are in the Hebrew, *Having the banner of above ten thousand*. Christ is the Standard-bearer of ten thousand, that excells all other creatures in the world. The Spouse useth a meta-

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Vexillatus.

phor taken from the war, as also putteth a number certaine for an uncertaine, to expresse the commendations of her beloved. Now the Banner or Ensigne is a warlike instrument, and commonly the bearer thereof, one of the chiefeft, and tallest, and mightiest men: and amongst ten thousand men a man may find many goodly countenances, but yet saith she, for sound and naturall moysture, and for a most temperate and beautifull colour: Looke among infinite numbers of people, yea, among all the Sons of *Adam*, you shall not find one or any, any way matchable with my beloved. The Standard or Ensigne is that, under which the whole Army doe encamp, as appears, *Num. 2.* Here Christ is set forth above all, to be Gods Standard-bearer, to be set up for an *Ensigne of the Nations*, *Isa. 11. 10.* And all the *Armies in Heaven and Earth* follow him, *Rev. 19. 10.* The Saints worship him, Angels they adore him, for he is the *Lion of the Tribe of Judah*; the first borne of God, set above all the Kings of the *Earth*, as the Psalmist speaketh.

Now in that Christ is set forth comparatively, to be more excellent then ten thousand.

Hence Observe.

That as Christ is glorious and beautifull: so he is incomparable beyond all others.

Take the very quintessence and perfection of all creatures, and extract all the glorie out of them, and it will be nothing in comparison to Christs glorie. *Adam* in innocency in his first created glorie, and morall righteousness, was but a type, a figure of the son of God. Indeed *Adam* had the perfection of all creatures; but Christ had all the perfections of God himselfe, his wisdom, power, goodnesse, and glorie, Christ is that second

second *Adam*, the Lord from heaven, the Lord of glory, the brightnesse of Gods face and glory, the expresse image of his person, the invisible God, the life manifested, the word of God, the *Alpha* and *Omega*, this is he that is *Immanuel*, or God with us. Thus much for the generall discription of Christ. Now followeth that which is more particular.

VER S. 10.

His head is as fine gold, his locks as bushie, and black as a Raven.

THere are two things that concurre to make a perfect beautie.

First, A good complexion, and healthy constitution.

Secondly, A just Symmetrie or proportion of parts. The Spouse therefore doth not thinke it sufficient in generall to set out Christ thus; to say he is *white and ruddie*, &c. that he is of very good complexion and temperature: but also, she sheweth, that there is in him also a comely proportion of parts: from the correspondence and agreement of parts ariseth a feature compleatly beautifull and lovely. The Spouse enumerates and reckons up all his parts, and therefore borrows phrases and comparisons, from things that are most excellent, to set forth the excellency of Christ above all other things.

Hence Observe in the generall.

That a Christians heart is large in affections to Jesus Christ.

See here the Spouse, though she was ill intreated of the watchmen; and in some sort deserted of Christ himselfe, yet she goes on, and sets out a particular commendations.

mendations of her beloved. Now whence is it that the faith and graces of the Saints are so impregnable? whence is it that their hope is so indefatigable, and never out of breath? whence is it, that no stormes or tempests of tentation can breake their spirits, and make them give out; but that largenesse of affection, that they have towards Christ: An example we have in Peter, Lord, (saith he) *if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water;* So it is with the Saints, they refuse not to venture even upon boistrious stormes, and dangers to goe to Christ. Hence was Jobs resolution, *Though thou kill me, yet will I trust in thee.* Hence also it is, *That the Children of God, though they walke in darknesse, and have no light all, yet they will trust in the name of the Lord, and stay themselves upon their God, Isa. 50:10.* Now because Christ hath not one, but many excellencies; every thing in him is excellent, inward, and outward; from his head to his feet, &c. for indeed beauty consists not only in colour and complexion, but in affinitie and proportion of all parts. Now to come to the particulars, and first she beginneth with his *head*, saying.

His head is as fine gold.

The Spouse begins to set out the excellency of the chiefe part, viz. the *head*. Now the head of Christ is God, as the Apostle saith in 1 Cor. 11. 3. *That Christ is the head of every man, that the man is the head of the woman, and that God is the head of Christ.* The head hath an eminencie above all other parts, and also an influence upon all the Members, wee may understand this of God, who is the head of Christ, as the Apostle saith, in 2 Cor. 12. 13. or, we may understand it of the headship of Christ over his Church, that his administrations, government, and headship is most glorious and excellent

excellent, most splendent and shining, as pure gold.

As fine gold, or the solid gold. Two names of the best gold are here joyned together. The first name in the Hebrew is *Cethem*, that is, fine shining gold: the second is *Paz*, that is, strong and solid gold, or gold that's purified: hereby the Spouse setteth forth how excellent, how glorious, how rich and shining the head of Christ is: for among earthly things what is comparable to the fine gold, it's held of all mettals most precious, and of all treasures the richest. And as gold is precious: so it's durable mettall, which shews, that Christs headship and dignitie is everlasting and durable, it is divine and heavenly, and of a glorious extent.

Hence Observe,

That Christ is eminent and glorious, in respect of his headship.

God is the head of Christ, and Christ is the head of Saints. *In Christ were hidden all the treasures of divine wisdom, for in him dwelt the fullnesse of God; he was the expresse image of the Fathers person, and the brightnesse of his Fathers glory.* Christ lived in the knowledge, counsell, wisdom, and bosome of the Father, and therefore was an excellent head, a golden head: neither is he compared to every kind of gold, but to that which is most pure and solid, he is eminent, glorious, and shining in all the excellencies of his father, and doth administer to his Spouse, that he receives from God: so that his Members are golden members, from his influence, who is a golden head: therefore the seven Churches are stiled the *seven golden candlesticks*, *Revel. 1.* Every thing in the Tabernacle was gold, to shew, that every thing in the Spouse is excellent. It is most certaine, that there is much false gold in the world:

world: naturall and carnall men have golden images of their owne, but it will be found at the best to be but guilt, and externall paintings: but Christ only is a head of gold, not only his Crowne gold, but his very head is gold, pure gold, refined, and all gold, and nothing but gold, all shining and glorious.

Thus much for the commendation of Christs head. Now she proceedeth to his haire.

His locks are bushie, and black as a Raven.

His locks are bushie, or, curled. The curling of the locks sheweth that the haire is soft, which argueth in a naturall body, a gentle disposition. His hairie locks, of which before he complaineth in verse 2. that they were filled with the *drops of the night*, here they are commended for being *curled*, or on heaps, bushie, and hanging downe. The *Nazarites* according to the Law, did weare long haire as appeares by *Samson*, though they did weare it after a most grave and sober manner. She describeth his haire, not only to be *bushie*, and *curled*, but to be: *Black, &c.*

The *blacknesse* of the haire, maketh the beaurie of the skinne more shining and glimmering in the eyes of men. The blacknesse of the haire then was no unseemly colour, especially in mens haire, and the rather if wee have regard to the people inhabiring in the Land of *Judah*, which is very hot and parching. She addeth.

And black as a Raven.

In that she compares it, by the blacknesse of a *Raven*, she sheweth, that it was a naturall and pure black of it selfe, which is farre more excellent, both in black and all other colours, then any that is made so by art.

Now for curled and black haire, it is a signe of a hot braine,

braine, and argues in nature quicknesse and dexterity of wit, and strength, and courage in him that it groweth upon. This denotes unto us all that spirituall wisdome, vigour, and strength of Christ, the depth of all his understanding, and counsels.

Hence note.

That Christ was fitly qualified for all his administrations. He was gentle and mild, he would not breake the bruised reed, nor quench the smoaking flax until he bring forth judgement unto truth, &c. Isa. 42. 3. He was full of wisdome, counsell, justice, and gravity, therefore called the *Ancient of dayes*, Dan. 7. 22. All his counsels, thoughts, and purposes were in the hidden mysteries of God: he was privy to the heart and bosome of his father, living in the knowledge and secrets of God, in that light which no creature can approach unto. He is called the *wonderfull Counsellour, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace*, Isa. 9. 6. Now she passeth from the head, and from the haire, to the eyes, saying

VER. II.

His eyes are as the eyes of Doves, by the rivers of water, washed with milke, and fitly fit.

He now describeth his eyes, by the sober comelines and beautie of them, they being full of innocencie, singlenes, and chastitie, which he meaneth to expresse, by comparing them to Doves eyes. The Spouse attributeth it here unto Christ, which he before attributed unto her, Chap. 1. 15. Also Chap. 4. 1.

His eyes are as the eyes of Doves.

The eye of the Dove (as hath been said before) is a beautifull eye, chaste, and single. To the Doves eyes

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therefore

therefore she liketh the eyes of her beloved : but she doth not compare them to *Doves eyes*, that is, to every sort of *Doves eyes*, but to such as be most beautiful and cleare, which may appeare by the words following.

By the Rivers of waters.

By the Rivers, streames, or currents of water, that runne violently, such waters as are pure and cleane; that is, like such *Doves*, as haunt and abide by the *Rivers of waters*, where they have plenty of water, to wash themselves and their eyes, to make them cleare and fresh, wee know that running water is good to fresh and cleare the sight. And therefore the clearenes and beautie of these *Doves eyes* are set forth, in that they are mentioned to be such *Doves*, as delight to be by the *Rivers of cleare waters*.

Then father she saith.

They be washed with milke.

This expression declares a further brightnesse in *Christs eyes* : so that if it be not sufficient to resemble them to *Doves*, that use the cleare streames: then let them be compared to such, as for the clearenes and freshnesse of their eyes, wash themselves in *milke*, that so they may appeare, and be judged white and comely, shining with cleare brightnesse. She addeth.

And fitly set.

Fitly set, or *sitting in fulnesse*, or *they remaine upon the fulnesse*. This expression may admit of a double interpretation.

First, If the similitude of waters be continued, then wee may understand, *full Channels of water*, by which, *Doves* delight to sit, and therefore some render the words, *They remaine upon the full vessels* : and so the meaning would be, *That as Doves eyes be full of moisture, that*
remaine

remain and continue by full Vessells: so is Christ the head of the Spouse, of whose fullnesse the members receive grace for grace. But there is no speech of Vessells in the Hebrew Text, but the words stand thus. *They remaine upon the fullnesse.*

And here we must know, that the word here Translated *fullnesse*, doth signifie the hollow place in which a precious stone is set, as a Diamond, or precious stone in a Ring is made meet and fit to fill up the hollow place of the Ring. So the precious stones set upon Rings or rows upon the golden Ephod, *Exod. 25. 7.* had their hollow places in which they were cunningly set, and so were called the *stones of fulnesse*, because they did in so fit sort fill their hollow places. So that as a precious stone is made fit for the hollow of the Ring: So the commendation of the eyes is, that they are fitted for the holes of the head. And as stones thus fitted and cunningly set in the Ring are seemly and beautifull, so it is a speciall commendation of the eyes of man or woman, to stand even; for if the eyes doe stand forth too much, it is a deformity, as we use to say, goggle eyed: and likewise if they be sunk in too deep, then they be, as we use to terme them, hollow eyed. Now Christs eyes are neither of these, his pure eyes are as pretious stones that are fitly set in their places: he is not goggled eyed, his eyes are stiddy and firme, they be as a stone in a gold Ring, which cannot be turned out of their place: his eyes are evermore guiding his sight to looke perfectly into all things, into the depth of mans heart, and into the depth of Gods secrets and counsells.

Hence Note,

That Christs eyes are pure, cleane, and comely. His
H h h h 2 eyes

eyes are as a *flame of fire*, Revel. 1. 14. And as *Lamps of fire*, Dan. 10. 6. That is, his eyes are bright, light-some, and piercing: implying his omniscience, whereby he is able to disperse all the darke clouds of sin and ignorance, to cleare and enlighten all his Saints: and he is able to pry into all the corners of mens hearts, and discry the privie plots and contrivances of all his adversaries, as in Jer. 16. 17. Prov. 15. 11. Job 34. 21, 22. Heb. 4. 12. 13. And his eyes are not full of light, but full of purity and cleanness, like Doves: he is of more pure eyes then to behold iniquity, *Habuk. 1. 13.* His eyes are also full of grace and mercy, tenderness and pity, yea, full of commiseration to all his Saints, his eyes are alwayes upon them for good, as in *Deut. 11. 12. Psal. 34. 15.* The Spouse passeth from the commendations of his *Eyes* to his *Cheeks*.

V. E. R. S. 12.

His Cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers, his Lips like Lillies dropping sweet smelling Myrrhe.

IN this Verse we have two parts commended.
1. His Cheeks. 2. His Lips.

His Cheeks are a bed of spices, as sweet flowers.

Cheeks are the grace and beauty of the face, they are here used to denote Christs presence and heavenly countenance, which is sweet, as spices and flowers. The Cheeks are set forth by a double comparison. 1. They are likened to a bed of Spice, meaning a Garden bed, wherein spice aromaticall is set. The comeliness of his Cheeks is set forth in the word *Bed*, and the sweetness of them in the word *Spice*, for beds set out Gardens, and Spices we know smell well, and are very fragrant. She addeth.

And

And sweet flowers.

Sweet flowers) or, *Growne plants*, so named of being growne great: The word also may be Translated *Towers*, which have their names of greatnesse. If we should Expound the words then after the usuall signification, we should say, *As the Towers of those which make sweet Ointments*, but we may more fitly take them to be growne Plants of those that deale with spices and sweet Ointments, seing the proper signification of the word is of greatnesse. By these Cheeks the comeliness and grace of Christ is set forth.

Hence Observe,

That Christ is full of grace and comelinesse to all that behold him.

His Cheeks (which is the grace of the face) is for comelinesse like a *Bed*, and for sweetnesse like *Spice*, and *Growne plants*. Christs comelinesse and gravity, shines forth to all that behold him: all his graces are sweet, and his sight and countenance hath a transforming vertue, it makes those that behold him to be like unto him, while others behold his glory, they are transformed into the same image of his glory, from glory to glory, by the spirit of the Lord, 2 Cor. 3. 18. Thus much for the commendations of his Cheeks, that of his Lips followeth.

His Lips are like Lillies, dropping sweet smelling Myrrhe.

The Lillies are very glorious, beautifull, and faire to behold, for that flower amongst others, is of a goodly colour, and faire to look upon. This flower is commended in many places of this Song, as whereun-

to the Spouse her selfe is compared in respect of her beauty, Chap. 2. 2. And in the same Chapter, *vers.* 16. it's attributed to Christ also. See Chap. 4. 5. This flower is not onely beautifull, but of a pleasant smell, and of good and tall growth, all which tendeth still to the expressing of the glory and beauty of Christ, and to the sweet and pleasant smells that are to be found in him. Now the Lillies are fragrant and sweet of themselves, yet she addeth.

They drop pure Myrrhe.

Pure, or passing Myrrhe, such as will passe, and is vendible among Merchants, as in *Verf.* 5. it's meant the *Oile of Myrrhe*, which is the sweetest of all. Now the Lips, here compared to Lillies, and sweet Myrrhe, we know are the instrument of speech, and therefore this is to be referred unto the holy, heavenly, sweet and gracious doctrine of Christ. *Honey and Myrrhe*, that is, grace, love, goodnesse, and mercy, did flow out of Christs mouth. In this respect the Spouse said before that her lips did drop as the *Honey-comb*: and now she saith that his lips doe drop pure *Myrrhe*.

Hence Observe,

That the gracious, holy, and heavenly doctrines that proceed from Christ, are very sweet and savory. The words which Christ spake when he was in the flesh, are said to be gracious words, *Luke* 4. 22. And in *Psal.* 45. 3. *Grace was poured out of his lips.* The sweetnesse of his words are here set out by the similitude of the pleasant Lillie, and the sweet Oile of *Myrrhe*: Such is the sweetnesse of the Gospell in the hearts of believers. The word of God is full of sweetnesse, and all manner of delight, *it rejoiceth the heart, as the Prophet saith,*

Psal.

psal. 19. 6. Spreading abroad the favour thereof, even far and near, after the manner of the pleasant Lillies, and most precious, pure, and sweet *Myrrhe*. Christ saith, *That out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.* Now Christs heart being a treasure of good things, the dropping of his lips must needs be sweet, that utter and spread abroad those good things. Christ speaks from the excellency of his Spirit, and from hearty affections dyed in love: his lips then must needs drop sweetnesse, they must needs have a pleasant tast.

It followeth.

VER S. 13.

His Hands are as Gold Rings set with the Berrill, his Belly is as bright Ivory overlaid with Saphires.

AS the Lips are the instruments of speech, so are the hands for action. Christ was not onely mighty in words, but also in deeds before God and all the people, *Luke 24. 19.* Therefore it is that Christs hands are likened to Gold rings, or, that his hands were adorned with Gold rings. Now Rings were counted pretious in those dayes, they were great Ornaments and deckings, *Isa. 3. 21. Luke 15. 22.* Neither doth she say *simplings*, but *rings of Gold*: that is, glorious and precious, shining like gold. And to expresse the glory of it more, she addeth.

Set with the Berrill.

The Hebrew word *Tharshish*, is a pretious stone, spoken of, *Exod. 28. 20.* It is something uncertaine what stone it was, and therefore some render it by the word *Chrisolite*, others turne it *Berrill*, of the Sea
The

The *Chrysolite* is reported of some to be a very rich, precious stone, that comes out of *Ethiopia*, glistering as gold, and that 'tis of Sea-green colour. The *Berrill* is reported to be another stone that groweth in *India*, it selfe being, as they suppose, an Indian word, and given by the people as a name to that stone.

Some write, that this stone in former times was usually set in such Rings as Lovers did use to give one to another; or in Marriage Rings: because of the power that was thought to be in it, to procure and continue love one towards another. But to come to the word it selfe, sometimes it is used for the name of a man, as *Genes.* 10. 4. sometimes for the name of a City or place, as in *Cilicia*, *Jonah* 1. 3. sometimes it is used for the name of a precious stone, as here. However we take it, thus much it signifies, that all the works of Christs hands are most rare, precious, and glorious: for we must understand by his *Hands*, not onely his strength and power, but also all his works, because Christs power is in the performance of them. Thus his hands are set forth, with all Ornaments and precious stones, and shining Rings of gold.

Hence Observe,

That all Christs actions are exceeding glorious. Hands are instruments of actions, all Christs actions are precious. It was said in the dayes of his flesh he did all things well, for by laying hands upon them that were diseased, he healed them. *He laid his hand upon the Leper, and healed him, saying, I will be thou cleane,* *Mark* 1. 41. So here, his works are as glorious still, yea, and more glorious now, though we cannot see the excellency of them in the new Creature, and in reigning in our hearts, he works gloriously, he hath a hand, there

there, a golden, and a pretious hand. The works of God are pure and beautifull; yea, most precious, and that beyond Gold and precious stones, yea, more glorious then numbers of Rings, filled with all manner of precious stones. Hence it is, that when *David* would expresse the wonderfull works of God, he saith, *If I would declare and speake of them, they are more in number then I can expresse*, Psal. 40. 5. And the Psalmist speaketh by way of admiration, saying, *When I consider the Heavens, the works of thy hands, the Moone, and the Stars, which thou hast ordained, what is man?* &c. Psal. 8. And then concludeth, *O Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the Earth!* These words are meant of the new creation of the soule, as we may see in *Heb. 2.* though the forme of words are borrowed from the first creation. And truly the works of Christ are admirable and full of majesty, if we doe but consider them in the course of the Creatures, in the Sunne, Moone, Starres, in the growth of Herbs, and Plants; so in all the Creation, in Gubernation, and Governement, in ordering the event of all things, and the like. Now as all the Governement of *Ægypt* went through the hands of *Joseph*; so all the works of God, goe through the hands of Christ. The Father hath committed all judgement to the hands of his Sonne, glorious therefore are the works which he doth performe in Heaven and Earth. It followeth.

His Belly is as bright Ivory overlaid with Saphires.

His belly or *Breast*: she putteth a part for the whole body, and by this she meaneth his bowells, or his inward parts. In Hebrew it is used for inward affections, so the heart is said to be among the *Bowells*, in

Psal. 22. 15. The *Liver* is joyned with the bowells, in *Lam. 2. 11.* by these are meant the inward affections of the soul. To explain this more, she saith, that his belly is overlaid with *bright Ivory*, or with the *brightnesse of Ivory*, the meaning, that he was as comely and cleare as the *Ivory*, which is a thing very *white* and *bright*: made (as some say) of an *Elephants* tuske, which kind of Beasts are onely in *Africa*, naturally as some hold: neither doth she simply compare it to *Ivory*, but addeth, *overlaid*, or *covered with Saphires*, that is, that which hath most rich and sumptuous cost bestowed upon it. *Ivory* of it selfe, because it is a thing rare, and far brought, must needs be very costly, how much more then when it is beset with precious stones, yea, with most costly and precious stones, such as *Saphires* are. Some of the Jewish writers take these *Saphires* to be such precious stones as are of the colour of the aire: some take it to be a white stone, some a red stone, some take it to be an *Adamant*, some thinke it to be of a blewish colour, intermixed with purple, having certaine sparks, as it were like *Gold*. The best sort of these stones are among the *Medes* in *Media*: whatever the stone be, the meaning of the Spouse is to shew, that Christ her head, was not onely most comely adorned, but also most sumptuously and costly, even as *Ivory* beset with *Pearls* and most precious stones. The bowells of Christ, like burnisht *Ivory*, decked with *Saphires*, signifie his inward bowells of affection, that tender mercy, and pitifull commiseration of his, toward his *Saints* and *Children*.

Hence Observe,

That Christ is full of tender, sweet, inward, and heavenly affections towards his people.

Christ's

Christ's affections towards his Saints, are pure affections, like *sapphires*, or precious stones: they are pure like the pure water in a Crystall glasse, that may be stirred but without any filth appearing in the bottome, it is pure without any dregs at all mixt with it. Such are Christs affections, such are his bowells. The Apostles great longing after the Saints is said to be in the bowells of *Iesus Christ*, Phillip. 1. 8. Christ is the most mercifull, the most pittifull, and the most compassionate High-Priest that ever was: and therefore it was that he was made like unto us, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, subject to hunger, thirst, cold, wearinesse, tentation, and the like, as we. The Apostle saith in *Heb. 2. 17.* that this was behovefull, *That he ought in all things to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a mercifull High-Priest in things pertaining to God, &c.* And againe saith the Apostle, *We have not a High-Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin,* *Heb. 4. 15.* So that there was never any Priest so mild, so gentle, so gracious, so loving, so tenderly affectionate, and so regardfull of our condition, as Christ was. Christ is one that can beare with our weaknesse, overcome our corruption, and give sentence of victory over sin and Satan, as we may see in *Isa. 63. 9. & 40. 11.*

In the Law we read, that the High-Priest was to beare the names of the Children of *Israel* in his Pectorall, or Brest-plate, upon his heart: Now this did figure and shadow out unto us, the tender love and pittie Christ beares to his people, guiding the blind, feeding the hungry, comforting the comfortlesse, restoring such as are out of joynt: all is mercy and love.

and sweetnesse, and more then motherly affection that comes from him. Hence Christ hath this title *one of many commiserations*, Jam. 5. 11. It followeth.

VERS. 14.

His legs are as Pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold: his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the Cedars.

IN this verse two parts are commended in Christ.

First, his legs.

Secondly, his countenance.

His legs are as Pillars of marble, &c.

Legs, and Thighs, may both be here comprehended: The legs are instruments to goe withall, and to beare and sustaine the body, and to carry it from place to place: so the legs of man are mentioned (in *Psal. 147. 10.*) to signifie mans strength and swiftnes. This denotes, that Christs wayes are full of majesty and power, and therefore she saith, that *his legs are as pillars of marble*: that is, constant and firme, durable *as marble*. In *Reu. 1.* he is set out, as having *legs of brasse* to trample his enemies in pieces: but here in respect of his constant truth and goodnesse towards his Saints, his legs are said to be *as Pillars of marble*, by which she doth not only note his strength, but also his comelines. For *marble* (though there be sundrie sorts thereof) are counted such stones, as are commended for severall colours and spots in the same, and hath its name in the Greeke tongue, for a certaine kinde of glittering Greene. She addeth.

Set upon ſockets of fine gold.

Chriſts feet, as they are like *marble*: ſo they have *ſockets of gold*, to ſtaine them and beare them up: whereby he walks ſafely, and his foot ſtumbleth not, as in *Prov.* 3. 23. with theſe feet of juſtice he treadeth downe his enemies, *Pſal.* 110. 1. Alſo with theſe he bringeth glad tydings of peace unto his people, *Nab.* 1. 15. Thus Chriſt in his wayes of truth and goodnes towards his people, is ſound, ſtrong, conſtant and durable: for ſo is marble amongſt ſtones, and fine gold amongſt other mettals: ſo that Chriſts feet being compared to marble and gold, ſignifie, that they never turne back, but are ſtedfaſt and ſure, he halteth not in his proceedings, neither doth he tread awry: he is not ſubject to change, but without ſhadow of turning, whereas men are variable and uncertaine in all their projects and deſignes.

Hence Obſerve.

That Chriſts wayes of truth and righteousneſſe towards his people are firme and ſtable,

All Chriſts paſſages and wayes are conſtant and firme, even as Pillars of marble, that have ſockets of gold to ſtaine them. He is *Alpha and Omega*, the beginning and the ending, which was, which is, and which is to come, *Revel.* 1. 8. He is *yesterday and to day*, and the ſame for ever, *Heb.* 12. 8. He is not like the image, which *Nebuchadnezzar* dreamed of, *Whoſe head was gold, breſt & armes ſilver, belly and thighs braſſe, legs of Iron, and feet part of Iron, and part of clay*, *Dan.* 2. 32. That Image ſtood upon a weake foundation, the kingdomes figured by that image, were not of long continuance, but the Kingdome of Chriſt is everlaſting.

It followeth,

His countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the Cedars.

As his feet were beautifull in bringing ^{of} ^{peace} ^{to} ^{the} ^{people} ^{of} ^{Israel} ^{and} ^{the} ^{world} ^{of} ^{peace}; so his countenance is most pleasant and delightfull. By his countenance is meant the appearance and forme of his person, he is like, in stature and tallnesse, to the Cedars of Lebanon; for it is, as if he should have sayd, looke upon my beloved, view his stature, which is like the goodly tall Cedars of Lebanon.

Lebanon was a goodly mountaine in the North part of the Land of Canaan, see the same mentioned in chap. 4. 8. He is not only set out by this goodly mountain; but also by the excellent Cedars that grew there. Christ is choice, excellent, as the Cedars, that is, goodly, excellent, flourishing, and continuing in vigour; as it is said, the just man groweth as a Cedar in Lebanon, Psal. 92. 13. This notes the presence and majesty of Christ.

Hence note.

That the sight and presence of Christ is full of majesty and glory.

The sight of Christ is full of glory to the Saints, as in John 1. 14. Wee saw his glory, as the glory of the only begotten, full of grace and truth: for, indeed he was the brightnesse of Gods glorie, Heb. 1. It was the glorie of God, that shined through Christ. It was God manifest in the flesh, and tooke our nature to discover his glorie by it. Now this sight and presence of Christ, as its glorious to the Saints; so it is full of majesty to the wicked: when God was pleased to let out some of his glorie through Christ, men were not able to beare it, as those that came to apprehend him, when he said, *I am he*, they fell downe backward, his countenance

was

was too dreadfull for them to behold it. So the Psalmist speaketh, when God appeares, *The mountains flow downe, and the hills melt at his presenſe*; that is, the great mountains of fleſh, and great ones of the world, are not able to ſtand before him.

It followeth,

VERS. 15.

His mouth is moſt ſweet, yea, he is altogether lovely: this is my beloved, and this is my friend, O Daughters of Jeruſalem.

His mouth or his palate, is ſweet or ſweetneſſe, that is, *this mouth is as ſweet things*: or, wee may reade it, *The rooſe of his mouth is moſt ſweet*, for there commeth nothing out of his mouth, but that which is ſweet. The mouth is an inſtrument of nature, whereby the voice is formed, viz. *the rooſe of the mouth*, even the voice it ſelf, and the words uttered therewith: and by ſweetneſſe, which ſhe uſeth in the plurall number, ſhe meaneth both the pleaſantneſſe of his word, which as *David* ſaith, was more ſweet unto his taſt, then the honey and the honey-comb, *Psalm. 19. 10.* and alſo the abundance, and wonderfull plenty thereof. Now the Spouſe doubleth this commendation, ſhe had ſaid before, *his lips were as lilies dropping ſweet myrrhe*, here ſhe ſaith again of his mouth, it is moſt ſweet, to ſhew, that this is the chiefe loving thing in Chriſt. By the *mouth*, wee muſt underſtand the ſame as by his lips, to wit, the ſweet, gracious, and heavenly doctrines of Chriſt, the word of eternall life, that proceedeth out of his lips, only the repetition of this part, ſheweth the excellency thereof.

Hence

Hence Observe.

That the heart and affections of Christ, uttered by his mouth is most sweet unto the Saints

It is Christ himselfe that saith, Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh, and that which cometh out of Christs mouth, is nothing but the opening of his heart, and the unbosoming of himselfe unto his Saints: it is God, speaking his own affections through Christ unto his people: this must needs be sweet and the sweetest, when many of Christs followers left him, he turnes to his Disciples, and saith, will ye also forsake me? Peter answers for himself and the rest, Lord, whither shall wee goe, thou hast the words of eternall life, Joh. 6. 68. as if he had said, Lord, if wee forsake thee, we forsake our owne happinesse, our owne comfort. The Spouse having commended the severall parts of her beloved, she now addeth a generall commendation of him, by saying.

He is altogether lovely.

He is altogether, or, all of him is desired, that is, most to be desired, he is wholly delectable; as if she should say, I will not stand to prosecute every part, but he is altogether from top to toe (as we use to say) amiable, desirable and lovely, he is all glorious and excellent.

Hence Observe.

That as Christ is lovely in all parts, so he is lovely in his whole selfe. There is not any thing in Christ, but its lovely, he is lovely in particular, and he is lovely in generall, he is lovely in all parts, and altogether, yea he is altogether lovely: as if the Spouse should say, what shall I say more of my beloved? he is all over, and altogether lovely. Christ is lovely to God, to Angels, to Saints: he is lovely as God, and as Mediator, being

being Prophet, Priest, and King, in all offices, and graces, in all the operations of his Spirit: he is the brightness of Gods glory, the shining of Gods face, he must needs then be most excellent, most glorious. Therefore if wee doe but take a view of all the high perfections, and supereminent excellencies of Christ; if wee doe anatomise him in every particular, and particularise him in every excellency, wee shall find him to be lovely in all parts, to be altogether lovely, to be wholly delectable. Now the Spouse having thus described her beloved, both in generall and particluar, she concludeth with an exclamation.

This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.

This being the close of her commendations of her beloved, I shall not stand on it, because wee had occasion to speake of the same termes before. She saith, *This is my beloved*, viz. that I have described unto you, O yee daughters of Jerusalem; *and this is my friend*: as if she should say, he is such a one, as I have painted out unto you, in this excellent shew and beauty, that yee may easily know him in and among others. And this doubling of the words, that are here used, was not only profitable to expresse her earnest affection towards him, but also to move them, with whom she talked, both to the loving, and liking of him. And by calling him her *beloved* and *friend*, she meaneth, that as Christ had discovered his affection to her; so she returnes love for his love, making him (as it were) her darling and best beloved, on whom she could set her heart, and bestow all her affections, and her whole selfe upon. Now in the Spouses thus ending so emphatically, with such an exclamation, *This is my beloved*,

&c. she giveth us to understand, that not being able by any figures, phrases, metaphors, similitudes, words or speech to describe him to the full, she would in a word, as it were, shut up all, that he himselfe within and without, both generally, and every part of him, was altogether amiable, and exceeding worthy to be affected, both of her selfe, and also of all those, that either should heare of him, or see him. The Spouse having such a lover as this, whom she hath described, hath she not good cause to seeke after him, yes, to be sick of love for him? *This is my beloved, &c.*

Hence Observe.

That the Spouse is exceeding large in her affections, in setting forth the high praises of her beloved.

The Spouse being entred in a commendation, knows not how to make an end: she begins in generall, and from thence descends downe to particular parts, and thinking not that enough, she also concludeth with a generall commendation, and at last shuts up all with a repetition of all againe, saying, *This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.* The Spouse is now setting forth the excellencies of her beloved, and her tongue is as the pen of a ready writer, her heart and affections are enlarged, she is now dilating upon a copious Theme, and therefore she cannot tell where to breake off, or make an end. The Spouse is willing to shew, that there was some cause of her seeking and searching after her beloved, and why she was sick of love; it was for one that was most worthy, most excellent. *This is my beloved, and this is my friend, &c.*

But when wee shall see the successe of this excellent commendations of the Spouse, concerning Christ, it will appeare it's not all in vaine: for, hereby she doth abundantly

abundantly draw out the affections of the daughters of *Jerusalem*, and therefore to whet their affections the more, he ſhews what an excellent perſon Chriſt was in his Government, counſells, purity, ſweetneſſe, inward affections, in all his wayes, actions, and adminiſtrations, he was holy, juſt, and righteous, &c. *This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O Daughters of Jeruſalem.* The ſucceſſe of this excellent diſcourſe, followeth in the next Verſe.

V E R S. 16.

*Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou faireſt among women?
Whither is thy beloved turned aſide? that we may ſeek
him with thee.*

THeſe Daughters hearing of ſuch a high commendation of Chriſt from the Spouſe of her beloved, hearing of his riches and glory, of his beauty, & excellency, they are enflamed with deſire to ſeek Chriſt alſo, and this is the effect which her ſpeech in commendations of Chriſt wrought.

The firſt queſtion propounded by the Daughters of *Jeruſalem*, was before, when they demanded, *What is thy beloved?* &c. whereupon the Spouſe deſcribes him to be very excellent, cloſing up her diſcourſe with this exclamation, *This is my beloved, and this is my friend, &c.*

Now here is a ſecond queſtion put by the Daughters of *Jeruſalem*, ſaying, *Whither is thy beloved gone?* At firſt they were ignorant *what* Chriſt is, and here they enquire *where* Chriſt is: and truly, if people did know the worth and excellency of Chriſt, they could not ſit downe in quiet without him, but would ſay, *Whither is he gone, where might we ſeek him? where might we find him?*

Hence Observe,

That it is the knowledge of Christ makes men seeke and search after him. See here, after the Spouse had painted out her beloved to the Daughters of Jerusalem, and had described his complexion, members, speech, and other excellent vertues, qualities, and graces in him, that if they had but either seene him, or heard him speake, they might have knowne him: the effect whereof is here seene in their hearts, namely, it so enflamed them with an earnest love towards him, that presently they will be companions with her in seeking of him. Now then, what a worthy thing is it, to open the riches, and spread the glory of Christ before men, for hereby they may draw men to know, and to seeke Christ.

Here the Ministers of the Gospell may learne what their chiefe duty is, and what is their work, but chiefly to draw men to love and seek after Christ. O then! display all the riches and treasures of Christs grace, and that splendent, shining glory of his, that men may be allured and drawne to Christ. Who will seek after that which he knows not off? and who will not seek after a precious Jewell? Then tell where this Jewell, this Pearle, this treasure is, that souldiers may seeke and search, and become Merchants for to adventure all for Jesus Christ.

Whither is thy beloved gone? &c.

The Daughters doe not now enquire what he is, for by that glorious description which the Spouse made unto her, of her beloved, hath given her to understand what he is. We see these Daughters are better instructed now, they know *what* Christ is, and therefore desire to know *where* he is, that they may be joyned

joynd to him, and enjoy his presence and communion: now from this further degree of desires in the Daughters, Observe

That where there are the least desires after Christ in the soule, those small desires are increased by Christ. Here we see there was a growth of desire in the Daughters of Jerusalem, they have ceased to aske *what* Christ is, and enquire *where* Christ is, where they may finde him, where they may enjoy his presence. Christ will cherish the least desires or breathings in the soule after him. *He will not breake the bruised Reed* (though never so weake) *neither will he quench the smoaking flax,* (but will rather encrease it into a flame) *untill he hath brought judgement unto victory.* That is, untill the blindnesse and enmity of the carnall mind be wholly brought under.

There is nothing lesse then grace at the first: the Kingdome of Heaven is compared to a graine of Mustard-seed, that is, as well the work of grace in the soul, as the word of grace in the Gospell, is small and contemptible. Here those breathings and desires in the Daughters after Christ at the first, were like a graine of Mustard-seed, when they enquire, *what is thy beloved?* But now these sparks are turned into flames, when she saith, *Whither is thy beloved gone?*

Againe, *Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women?* From this appellation, Observe,

That if we would be instruments of good to others, we should shew forth our selves to be holy and gracious. *O thou fairest among women?* The Daughters had a good conceit of the Spouse, and thought her to be gracious and holy, and therefore her speech took the more with them.

The

The Daughters double the question, *Whither is thy beloved gone? Whither is thy beloved turned aside?* As the Spouse before doubled her description, *This is my beloved, and this is my friend.*

Hence Observe,

That those that kinde others, must be enflamed in their owne hearts. Those that speak with experience and confidence, doe often make impressions upon the hearers. The Apostle *John*, in the beginning of his Epistle, to perswade others to imbrace his doctrine, he affirmeth, *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seene with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life, he delivered to them.* That which comes from the heart, often goeth to the heart, and that which comes from the affections, many times reacheth the affections.

The Apostle *Peter* saith, *We followed not deceivable fables, when we preached unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but with our eyes we saw his majesty,* 1 Pet. 1. 16. O beloved! It is an excellent thing to speake of the excellency of Christ, from knowledge and experience, and this many Christians can doe: but the watchmen before-mentioned (Chap. 3. 3. & 5. 7.) had no such knowledge or experience, but in them the saying was fulfilled, *The Pastors are become brutish, and have not sought the Lord, they shall not prosper,* Jer. 10. 21.

Lastly, in that she saith, *Whither is thy beloved turned aside, that we may seeke him with thee?* Towit, with thee his Spouse.

Hence Observe,

That the right way to seeke Christ, and the onely way to find

find him, is to seeke him with his Saints. Here the Daughters enquire for Christ of the Spouse, and to seek him with her, for so it is said, *That we may seeke him with thee.* We doe not know how God hath appointed us, though weake instruments, yet as profitable means to further one another in the knowledge of Christ. When the two Disciples went to *Emaus*, they talking together of Christ, it came to passe, that as they communed together, *Jesus himselfe drew nigh, and went with them,* Luke 24. 13. Though their eyes were holden for a time that they could not know him, yet after further communication he lodged with them; and sitting at the Table, at length caused their eyes to be open, and he manifested himselfe unto them: And so it is in this place, on a suddaine it is revealed to the Spouse, where he is whom she seeketh. Thus much for the question propounded by the Daughters of *Jerusalem*: Now the resolution of the Spouse followeth in the next words.

V E R S. 17.

My beloved is gone downe into his Garden, to the bed of spices, to feed in the Gardens, and to gather Lillies.

THe question in the former verse, was not slightly propounded by the Daughters, neither was it a bare desire of satisfaction, but from strong affections of seeking Christ. So the Spouse here doth not returne any slight answer, she is not wanting, but directly answers to the question: for there is no envy in spirituall things, because all may share alike: therefore she giveth a punctuall answer, saying

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My beloved is gone into his Garden, to the bed of Spices, &c.

In the answer of the Spouse observe two things.

First a declaration whither Christ is gone, where he is to be sought and found. *My beloved is gone into his Garden, to the bed of spices.*

Secondly, the end of his going downe is also declared, and that is, *To feed in the Gardens, and to gather Lillies.*

My beloved is gone downe into his Garden, &c.

The Garden of Christ is his Church, as in Chap. 4. v. 16. & 5. 1. The Catholique Church is his Garden, and the particular Churches are his Gardens and beds of spices, where companies of believers grow, in whose hearts are sowne the precious seed of the spirit, which the Apostle John calls, *The seed of God*: So the Saints become as a bed of spices in the Garden, comely, and sweet smelling, in whom Christs soul delights, as in sweet spices. Now the Spouse comes to know that Christ is in her, he was there present all the time of her seeking, but she perceived him not, but now he was manifest to her. Hence Observe,

That Christ is never absent from his Saints, though they cannot sometimes discern his presence. Christ was with his Spouse when she fainted for want of his presence, when she was sick of love, and when she made such a diligent search and enquiry after him, but she discerned him not all that while, but now he manifested himselfe unto her, so that now she hath a plaine discovery of him, when she saith, *My beloved is gone into his Garden, to the bed of spices, &c.* Christ is need his Spouse, as well when she hath not, as when she

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hath the manifestation of his presence. God was never nearer Christ, upholding him by his divine power, then when he cried out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* So the Lord is neare, yea, in the midst of his people, assisting, strengthening, and supporting them, when they have little or no sight, or apprehension of his presence. Secondly Observe.

That Christ doth not long together hide his divine presence from his Spouse. It is true, he may veile himselfe for a while, and withdraw his light and comfort from the soul; though he take not away his love, yet he may suspend the acts of it: he may seem to frowne, and to hide, and eclipse himselfe, that the soul for a while looseth sence, and feels not its owne happiness. Now when it is thus with a believer, Christ is gone, the comfort and assurance of his love is gone, joy, and love, and delight, and all is gone. O how disconsolate and sad is the soul then: this is very irksome to the soul that is in deared to Christ, and desires his communion: yet notwithstanding these things are but short, Christ will not be long absent from his Saints, his great delight and affection towards them will constraîne him to manifest himselfe. Joseph concealed himselfe for a while, but he was much streightened in his spirit, untill he had made himselfe knowne unto his brethren: So it is with Christ, he may keep at a distance from his people for a while, but it will not be long before he returne againe, and manifest himselfe unto his Spouse. Now followeth the end of Christs going downe into his Garden. *Viz.*

To feed in the Gardens, to gather Lillies.

First, Christs end in going downe into his Garden

is to feed *there*, that is, to associate himselfe, and communicate with his people in the graces of his owne spirit, eating his owne pleasant fruits, as in Chap. 4. 16. And also to Feast and refresh his people with diuine things, giving them of the heavenly Manna to eat, and of the River of life to drinke: he doth impart unto his Saints the graces of his spirit: he doth refresh his Gardens, *Viz.* All his particular Churches, with all variety of Heavenly dainties.

Hence Observe,
That Christ doth associate himselfe with his people, abundantly satisfying their souls with his sweetnesse. He feedeth in the Gardens, by communicating of himselfe and his glory unto his Saints. You may remember in Chap. 5. 1. Christ declares that he had eaten his honey with his honey-comb; and here he feedeth in the Gardens. The Prophet saith, He shall feed his flock like a Shepheard, he shall gather the Lambs with his armes, and carry them in his bosome, and shall gently lead those that are with young, Isa. 40. 11. So that Christ doth plentifully, and sweetly, and that with the greatest care that possible can be, feed and refresh his people. Another place paralel to this, is in Ezek. 34. 14. I will feed them in good pastures upon the high Mountaines of Israel, there shall their fold be, there shall they lye in a good field, in a fat pasture, I will feed my flocke, and cause them to lye downe, saith the Lord God. I will seeke that which was lost, and bring back that which was driven away; I will bind up that which was broken, and strengthen that which is feeble, and destroy the fat and the strong, and feed them with judgement. Here is store of all supply, yea, suitable supply for every want: a fit salve for every soare. Thus we see Christ doth feed in his Gardens, he doth communicate himselfe,

ſelfe, his ſpirit, and makes a comfortable ſupply to all our wants.

Secondly, Chriſts end in going into his Garden is to gather Lillies: that is, to accept the ſweet-ſmelling fruits of his owne graces, growing in his Churches; or, to gather his people to himſelfe, which are as Lillies among thorns. Chriſtians are compared to Lillies, for their purity and whitenesse, being cleane through the word, as the Apoſtle ſaith; that is, through Chriſt who is the word. The Lillie, as it is white and glorious, ſo it is a very tall, goodly plant, therefore the Spouſe is compared to it: Other men are compared to thornes becauſe they are noxious and hurtfull, they are good for nothing but to cumber the ground, and to be offenſive, and to be burned. So the wicked are compared to ſuch, becauſe they are hurtfull and offenſive, but the Saints are compared to Lillies, for beauty and fairneſſe. Hence Obſerve.

That the Saints are beautifull perſons. Here they are compared to the glorious and beautifull Lillie. God cloatheth Lillies of the field with excellent beauty, their glory is brought into competition with Solomons, whoſe glory came far ſhort of the Lillies whitenesse and beauty; and if God take care for Lillies will he not take care for you, O yee of little faith? Mat. 6. 29. Doth God care for Lillies, that are to day, and to morrow are caſt into the Oven, and ſhall he not care for theſe living holy Lillies? Yes, undoubtedly he will. Chriſts argument is undeniable, he that puts ſuch a beauty upon the poore plants, that ſhould wither to day in the morning, and wither before night, he that puts ſuch beauty upon the graſſe of the field, will he not put more excellency upon his Saints?

Without question he will. The Saints are as faire, and much fairer in Gods eye, then all the Lillies of the field. The Church is said to be, *cloathed with the Sun*, in Revel. 12. 1. That is, she was cloathed with God, and with Christ, with the Spirit, with the white robes of his righteousness, and therefore she must needs be glorious. And the Armies in Heaven, which are the Saints that follow Christ, are said to be *Cloathed in fine linen, white and cleane*, Rev. 19. 14. The Saints are a chosen people, to be holy, and without blame before him in love, Ephes. 1. 4. God looks upon the Saints without blame, not as concerning the flesh, and the carnall mind, which is enmity against God, but according to the Spirit, and the new man, which is created of God, after his owne image. And thus Christ is said, *to wash and cleave his Church, by the washing of water, and the word; that he might present it to himselfe a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish*, Ephes. 5. 26, 27. This is the pure, holy, and glorious condition of the Spouse. The Saints are Lillies, being cloathed with the white Garments of Christs righteousness, not having any naturall or fleshly glory of their owne: The whitenesse and purity of the Saints is borrowed, as the Moone borrows all her light from the Sunne, so the Saints derive their glory and excellency from Christ.

Lastly, in that she saith, the end of Christs going into his Garden is, *to gather Lillies*. Hence Observe, That Christ doth graciously accept of the fruits of his owne Spirit. Christ planteth a Vineyard, and delighteth to eat the fruit thereof; and so in Chap. 4. 16. Let my beloved come in, and eat his pleasant fruits. That is, let

let him accept of, and partake of all the fruits of his owne Spirit, fruits of union and fruits of communion when Christ becomes as a dew upon *Israel*; *Israel* becomes his pleasant plant, and is found to be fruitfull in returns to Christ againe; now Christ will accept of all those returns of his owne Spirit, from his owne people, he comes into his garden to gather Lilies, to accept of the returns of his owne Spirit.

The Spouse having thus resolved the daughters of *Jerusalem*, she begins to feelee some comfort, and refreshing from Christ, who had before estranged himselfe from her, and therefore she now concludeth with a kinde of triumphant acclamation upon all the former passages, both of her ill dealing with Christ, and Christs withdrawing from her: notwithstanding all former passages, she doth as it were glorie in her union and communion with Christ, as followeth in the next verse, where she saith.

V. E. R. S. 18.

I am my beloveds, and my beloved is mine, he feedeth me among the Lilies.

THis is the conclusion of the whole Chapter, and of all the speech that the Spouse hath with the daughters of *Jerusalem*, wherein she openly professeth that whatsoever may be done against her, that her affections are still the same towards Christ, and is also perswaded of his good will towards her: *I am my beloveds, and my beloved is mine.* The Spouse boasteth and glorieth in the renewed peace made betweene Christ and her, and their mutuall union and communion by the Spirit, notwithstanding her former infirmities and afflictions, Wee had the same words before in

Chap.

Chap. 2. 16. only here they differ in respect of the order of them: That first there, is last here: Here in the order of the words the Spouse saith, *I am my beloveds*, and afterwards, *my beloved is mine*: but however in order of the words, the Church saith, *I am my beloveds* first; yet in order of nature, Christ is ours first, though not in order of discoverie: The cause is knowne by the effect, though the cause be first in being, yet the effect is sometimes first in discoverie: so it is here, Christs love and goodnesse is the cause of ours: yet many times we see our owne before wee see his. *I am my beloveds*, and *my beloved is mine*. In these words you see a mutuall interest and an owning between Christ and his Spouse, as if the Spouse had said, as he will not have another, but will content and delight himselfe wholly with me. *Who feedeth among the Lilies*, that is, who liveth most pleasantly and sweetly, as they that eate their meate among Lilies, and other flowers, cannot but live in pleasure; but I shall not enlarge on this, having spoken largely of it in chap. 2. 16. So endeth the fifth chapter.

GANT.

CANTICLES.

CHAP. VI.

VER. 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15.

Thou art beautifull, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an Army with banners.

Turne away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me: thy haire is as a flock of Goats, that appeare from Gilead.

Thy teeth are as a flock of sheep, which go up from the washing, whereof every one beareth twins, and there is not one barren among them.

As a piece of a pomegranate are thy Temples within thy locks. There are threescore Queenes, and fourescore Concubines and Virgins without number. &c.



In the former Chapter, and especially towards the end thereof, the Spouse had very highly commended Christ her head, and that not only to stirre up others to love, and embrace him that was so excellent, but also to raise up and increase the fervencie of her affection towards him: so in this Chapter, Christ again on the other side doth likewise exceedingly praise her, not only thereby to expresse his great affection toward's her, and to let her know, that no love or commendation bestowed upon him is lost, but when that shall be requited.

ted to the full: but also to draw on others in a gracious affection to joyne themselves unto her, whom both he so tenderly loveth, and highly magnifieth. Now Christ having praised the Spouse greatly in the fourth Chapter, it may be demanded, why he doth againe, and that in the same manner, give such a high and singular commendation unto her, and to testifie to her so much of his love and hearty affection. This indeed may be demanded, least wee might imagine that here is a tedious and a needlesse repetition. The truth is, that this comendation is not superfluous, but commeth very fitly for the comfort of the Spouse: for you have seene in the beginning of the former Chapter, how unkindly she dealt with Christ, how he withdrew himselfe, as one displeased, so that she fell into great affliction, being tossed to and fro, with doubtings, least Christ for her unkinde dealing, should utterly depart from her, she bewaileth her offence, and seeketh after her beloved with much sorrow and trouble: and now least it might seeme, that by her offence, or by her affliction she had lost that former beautie and commendation, yea, least there might seeme to remaine some blot, or that her former liking was diminished, he doth give her the same, or rather greater commendations then before, and this is the reason, why Christ doth renew the commendations of his Spouse, because in the former Chapter the Spouse was full of mourning, griefe and sicknesse, for her negligence and carelesnesse towards her beloved, now he comforteth and assureth her, that notwithstanding the same, she is and shall be as deare unto him, as ever she was before: which thing also that shee might be the better perswaded of, he doth give her a large and unfeigned commendation.

In

In this Chapter Observe three parts.

First, Christ assureth his Spouse of his love, which he doth by describing of her beautie.

First, In generall, in verse 1. the Spouse is likened to be.

1. As *Tirzah*.
2. As *Jerusalem*.
3. As an army with banners.

Secondly, The Spouse is set forth in particular, by the parts and members of her body. verse 2, 3, 4.

1. Her *Eyes*.
2. Her *Haire*.
3. Her *Teeth*.
4. Her *Temples*.

The second part of this Chapter is, that Christ doth cleare, by way of preoccupation and doubt, which the Spouse might object, out of her owne weaknesse: that there be many assemblies in which religion is professed, which by their outward peace and prosperitie, which they enjoy, doe seeme to be more in Christs favour then she is, and to be more beautifull in his eyes then she, for they are described to be.

1. As *Queenes*, 60.
2. As *Concubines*, 80.
3. As *Virgines without number*, Verse 5. To which he answers, that the Church is more excellent.

First, To Christ she is,

1. As a *Dove*.
2. *Undeified*.
2. *An only one*.

Secondly, to others, she was.

1. *Blessed by the daughters*.
2. *Praised by the Queens and Concubines*,
verse 6.

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In

In the last place, least she should feare, that Christ having once forsaken her, might forsake her againe, he excuseth his absence from her heretofore, by which he in her sense and feeling only to have forsaken her, when as indeed he was neere unto her, and this is implied in the residue of the Chapter.

And thus much being said, both for the connection and division of the Chapter, into the chiefe parts and members, we come now to the sense of the words of the text as they lye:

Thou art beautifull, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an Army with banners.

In this generall description of the glorie of the Spouse, by which Christ maketh her glorious unto himselfe, he doth commend her by comparing her to two goodly Cities,

1. To Tirzah.

2. To Jerusalem.

In the next place he doth commend her terrible fortitude, when he saith, *Shee is terrible as an Army with banners.*

Thou art beautiful O my love.

Christ having met with his Spouse, who laboured and sought to finde him, doth after the manner of lovers, declaring his great affections, marvellously commend her beauty: wee must understand this in a spirituall sense, for the Spouse hath no beauty, but she receives it from Christ: so that Christ doth but commend his owne beautie in the Spouse. Now as this respects Christ, it propoundeth unto us the manifestation of his unfeined and continuall love towards his Spouse. Or if we respect the Spouse herselfe, then this commendation is for her comfort; as if Christ should say

say, thinke not that that surpassing beauty of thine is decayed, or that I have cast off my love and liking towards thee, by reason of thy former discourtesies, and negligence, I doe not disdain and scorne thee for thy spots, and defilements, but as I said before, in chap. 4. 1, 2. So I even now affirme the same still, thy beauty and thy favour is most acceptable and delightfull to me.

Hence Observe, first.

That Christ's love towards his Saints, is a beautifull, and continuall love.

Christ doth not sometimes love, and sometimes hate, but whom he loves once, he loves to the end. Although the Saints offend Christ often, yet he loves them still: he only purges them, and heales them of their spirituall maladies, which cannot be done without some smart; but he doth not a whit lessen, or detract his love from them, though his people come upon him every day for new favours and new supplies; yet his goodnesse is never wearied or tired out. The love of Christ towards his Saints never decayes or waxeth cold, like the stone *Asbestos*, of which *Solinus* writes of, that being once hot, it can never be cooled againe. The love of Christ is like a fountaine overflowing, and never dried up: yea, though thousands, millions of his Saints presse upon him at once, yet he hath enough for them all, for the fountaine of his love is never emptyed.

*Jul Solin.
Poly histor.
Cap. 12.*

Secondly note.

That Christ's love towards his Saints, is not only everlasting, but an exceeding great and magnificent love.

Here behold the greatnesse of the love of Christ, who doth quite forget all offences committed against

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him,

him, as if they had never been, he doth not so much as once upbraid his Spouse for her unkinde dealing; it's without question the Saints having experience how sweet the Lord is being made partakers of his great benefits, when the flesh prevailes upon them, are much dismayed, fearing that now they cannot be beautifull and deare in his sight. Now they have deformed themselves, how should he love, and delight in them? Here is therefore a speciall comfort ministred, that those breathing after his presence, he doth refresh them, he doth imbrace them, he doth love them, he doth commend them, and delight in them, even as if they had never done evill against him: what a sweet gracious and exceeding love is here? who can expresse the riches of this grace, who can be able any way to set forth this bountifullnesse of the Lord?

Now this beautie which is thus set forth in general, whereby the Spouse is commended, by comparing her in respect of her glory, to two famous Cities.

1. To *Tirzah*.
2. To *Jerusalem*.

Thou art faire as Tirzah.

Tirzah is the name of a most pleasant Citie in the coasts of *Israel*, scituated upon the River *Euphrates*, where after that the Kingdome of *Israel* was rent from the house of *David*, *Jeroboam* the King of *Israel*, built his Palace or dwelling house there, it being the most pleasant place in all the borders of *Israel*: of this Citie you may reade, *1 Kings* 14. 17. also 15. 21. and 16. 6, &c. This Citie was the dwelling place of one of the 31. Kings whom *Joshua* conquered, *Josh.* 12. 24. It hath its name of pleasantnesse

neſſe, or wel-pleaſedneſſe (being derived of a word that ſignifieth to *accept*, or *like of*) becauſe it did by the pleaſantneſſe and beauty thereof, draw all men, as it were, to the liking thereof, which ſhews it to be a goodly pleaſant place ; ſuch as Kings delight to dwell in. A like beauty is here aſcribed to the Spouſe, being made faire and beautifull in her beloved, by the indwellings of God, and his glorious ſpirit, the Father, Son, and Spirit, theſe take up the ſoul for a Pallace, or delightfull place to dwell in, ſo that the ſouls of the Saints are made glorious by the indwellings of God, when he ſets up his Throne there, and doth adminiſter life, ſpirit, and glory. It's added.

וְיָרָא
Voluit, bene-
volus, dele-
ctatus, pla-
catus, re-
conciliatus,
fuit, accep-
tauit, con-
tenuit, fuit.

Comeſly as Jeruſalem.

As for the beauty of this City, we have it much commended in Scripture, where it is called the *praiſe of the whole Earth*, *Iſa.* 62. 7. See alſo *Pſal.* 122. 3. & 48. 2, 3, &c. It was the place where the Lord choſe to dwell, and had his Temple built there, on Mount *Sion*, and the Church under the New Teſtament is called *Jeruſalem*, holy, and heavenly, *Revel.* 21. Beſides forreigne Writers report it to be the moſt famous City in the *Eaſt*. *Jeruſalem* ſignifies in the Hebrew, the ſight of peace. Thus we ſee the beauty and glory of the Spouſe ſet out unto us by Earthly ſimilitudes. And though it be true indeed, that none of theſe things can ſufficiently declare the ſame unto us, yet we may perceive that the Scripture hath not onely taken the moſt excellent things of the Land of *Ju- dah* and *Iſrael*, but of the whole world, to ſet forth the ſame unto us, that ſo under theſe earthly reſemblances, he might the better make us (who are very groſs and

See *Plin.*
Hiſt. Lib.
5. cap. 14.

and dull) to conceive of heavenly and spirituall things. Now in that the beauty, glory, and splendour of the Spouse is set forth by these two pleasant and famous Cities, which were both places of renown. So then, comparing the Spouse to *Tirzah*, which was the Kings Pallace, it is as much as if he had said, I will dwell in my Church, I will be neer her, and make her the place of my residence. And as for *Jerusalem*, she is not onely commended for her sanctity, that she is the holy City, but also for her peace and glory above other places. Hence Observe,

That the Spouse is made glorious by the presence of Christ; and by that peace and tranquillity that accompanies the same. The Spouse is glorious by the presence and indwellings of Christ; this appears in that it is said, *The Lord hath chosen Sion to be an Habitation for himself, he hath longed for her, this shall be my rest for ever, here will I dwell, for I have delight herein*, Psal. 122. 14, 15. When the Lord comes to reside in the soul, to delight, and take up his rest there, to advance his Scepter, and reign there, how glorious and beautifull must the soul needs be. Again it's said, *The Lord hath chosen Jacob to himselfe, and Israel for his owne Possession*, Psal. 135. 4. Meaning his Church, not onely of the Jew, but also of the *Gentils*. And the glory and peace of the Spouse is figured out by *Jerusalem*, where it is said, *She is builded like a City which is at unity within her selfe, thither the Tribes goe up, even the Tribes of the Lord, to testify unto Israel, and to give thanks unto the name of the Lord; there is the seat of judgement, even the seat of the house of David: peace be within thy walls, &c.* Psal. 122. 3, 4. So that here he doth promise inward and outward peace, according to that of the Apostle, *As many as walke*

walk according to this rule, peace shall be unto them, & mercy, and to the Israel of God, Gal. 6.16. There can be nothing but peace, goodnesse, delight and glory, where Christ doth inhabite. Thus much for Christs assuring the Spouse of his love, by describing of her beauty: Now followeth his commendations of her fortitude and strength.

Terrible as an Army with banners.

In these words the valour and fortitude of the Spouse is set forth; but one would thinke that this should be no great commendations, especially because the Church is resembled to a woman; neither doth it agree to that sex, neither is it praise-worthy in them, (as some suppose) to strike terrour into others. But for answer, its commendable for a woman, even by her gravity and sobriety, to strike terrour and feare into such as would make them disloyall to their husbands, which thing might aptly agree to the Spouse here, and that in a double respect; towit,

1. When as in respect of her Majesty, she so terrifieth her adversaries, especially false teachers, such as would corrupt her by false doctrine. Or,

2. When as in regard of her disobedient Children, she woundeth them by the word and discipline for a while; neither doth the Lord meanethis onely, by resembling his Spouse to *Armies with many Ensignes or banners*, but also to set out unto us thereby, the good order and invincible force of the same. Hereby Christ doth strengthen his Spouse inwardly against temptations and the flesh: for as it is an impossible thing to prevaile upon an Army, consisting of innumerable and valiant people: so it is as hard, yea, altogether

gether impossible to prevaile against the Church, she is of such strength, power, and courage, that though she may be assaulted, yet she can never be overcome.

Hence Observe,

That the Saints are full of fortitude and valour.

Here the Spouse is commended for one that is terrible as an Army with banners: and in Chap. 1. she is likened to a Troop of Horses in the Charriots of Pharaoh, she is strong and prompt to the battaile: for she is as one that hath put on the whole armour of God, she standeth in the spirituall battaile, and putteth her enemies to flight. The strength of the Church was typified in that speech where it is said, when Israel abode in his Tents, according to their Tribes, encamping in the Wildernesse, his Tents were goodly, his strength was as an Unicorne, he couched as a couragious Lyon, whom none durst stir up, *Numb. 24. 2. 5.* Thus we see why he saith she is terrible as an Army with banners: an Army that is strong, and marcheth with Banners or Ensignes, is very terrible to their adversaries to behold; even so is the Spouse unto the whole Army of spirituall enemies: but we must note, that the Saints are not thus strong of themselves, but in the power of God, in the power of the spirit. The Apostle teacheth, that we stand in the invincible power of his, by putting on the whole Armour of God, *Ephes. 6.* Thus Christ commendeth his Spouse in the generall: Now followeth his particular commendations of her in the next words.

V E R S. 2.

Turne away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me: Thy haire is as a flocke of Goats that appeare from Gilead.

IN this verse we have a description of two parts or members: towit, her *Eyes* and her *Haire*. But first of her eyes, in which part we may take notice.

1. Of Christs request to his Spouse, in these words, *Turne away thine eyes, &c.*

2. The reason of the request, *For they have overcome mee.*

Turne away thine eyes from me, &c.

The words may be read two wayes: for sometimes the word is used for turning towards, as in 1 *Chron.* 12. 23. sometimes for turning away, as in *Ezek.* 7. 22. But here it is most likely to be meant in the first sence, and then we must read the words thus, *Turne thine eyes over against me*: that is, looke upon me, and regard me, though thou be past, yet turne thine eyes back again, that thou mayest behold me, that so I may receive comfort in the sight of thee.

There be some that turne the phrase otherwise, as thus, *Turne away thine eyes from me*, for they are too strong for me, or, they overcome me: giving also this sence, that Christ would have the Spouse to cast her eye from him, because he could hardly keep himselfe from shewing againe most manifest tokens of his love, &c. But the former sence seems to be the most plaine and simple interpretation, not onely agreeing best with the circumstances and occasion of the place, and purpose of Christ, but also standing well with the meaning of the Hebrew word, which may, and doth

as well signifie to *turne to*, as *turne from*. Then the meaning is, *Turne thine eyes towards me*, towit, that I may be comforted and refreshed, for such is the reason here added.

For they have overcome me.

In the Hebrew these words run thus, *For they have lifted me up*: that is, they have lifted me up with comfort, and courage, and strength, &c. as in *Psa. 138. 3. Thou hast encouraged me, or lifted me up*. The Greek Translateth it, *For they have made me fly*: towit, as with wings. Then the sence is thus much, as if Christ had said to the Spouse, be of good comfort, looke up to me, that so I my selfe also, who am in some sort cast downe with thy heavinesse, may receive both comfort and glory by thy faith and beauty: for no question, that since the union and conjunction is so great betwixt Christ and his Spouse, as the Apostle saith in *1 Cor. 12. 12*. There is also a sympathie and fellow-feeling or suffering together, as it were. Christ being afflicted with his Church, and rejoyceth at the joy thereof. So that these words declare how much Christ is ravished, and lifted up with joy and gladnesse with her looks. The Spouse had twice before declared, that she was, as it were, sick and faint through love, as in *Chap. 2. 5*. Also *Chap. 5. 7*. So Christ declareth the same strength and power of love, to be in him towards her, that so she might know there was no love lost, and therefore he useth another speech, but to the same effect, when he saith, that she had plucked away his heart with one of her eyes, *Chap. 4. 9*. That is, she, with the beauty, simplicity, and chastity of her eyes, had even won his heart; it expresseth a vehement

hement affection of love towards her. Even ſo in this place, the beauty of her eyes doth affect him in a wonderfull manner. Hence Obſerve,

That the beauty of the Spouſe is exceeding great in Chriſts eyes. Here he doth very highly commend the glorious beauty of the eye of faith, and that in ſuch a kind of ſpeech that doth in the higheſt ſort that can be, expreſſe how much the beauty of her eyes doth delight him: for even, as ſhe ſaid before, ſhe was ſick of love, ſo he ſaith here, that he is, as it were, overcome with love. Faith is the eye of the ſoul, and how excellent is the beauty thereof in the eyes of the Lord, yea, it doth as it were, raviſh, and overcome him with the ſight thereof. Thus much for the commendations of her Eyes: That of her Haire followeth.

Thy haire is as a flock of Goats that appeare from Gilead.

The Haire of the Spouſe in a ſpirituall way may be meant of the multitude of believers, or the abundance of graces beſtowed upon the Church. But rather by the commendations of her haire, is meant, that her thoughts, counſells, purpoſes, &c. are orderly compoſed by the Lord, whereby they are like the Haire of Goats. But having ſpoken largely of theſe words in Chap. 4. 1. I ſhall paſſe them by here. It followeth.

VER S. 3.

Thy Teeth are as a flock of Sheep which goe up from the waſhing, whereof every one beareth Twins, and there is none barren among them.

THe ſpirituall Teeth of the Spouſe, wherewith ſhe eateth the ſpirituall dainties, and is nourish-
N n n n 2 ed

ed with the food, towit, the word of Christ, are as a flock of Sheep which goe up from the *washing*, that is, white, pure, and cleane: *All which bring Twins*, that is, they are all even and equall in bignes, as commonly Twins are: *And there is none barren among them*. He meaneth, that they were all full, and none wanting; for as Teeth answering evenly one to another, as in respect of the upper and nether jaw is comely, when one tooth standeth not farther out then another, but are all of an equall height or evennesse, it is sometimes a beauty to the Countenance; so it was with the Spouse. But I shall not enlarge my selfe on this, because it is Expounded before in Chap. 4. 2. where Christ speaketh the same things of the Spouse. He proceedeth from the commendations of the Teeth to the Temples.

V E R S. 4.

As a piece of Pomegranate are thy Temples within thy locks.

THy Temples, towit, of thy head, *betweene thy locks*, he speaketh of the Spouse according to the manner of women, who were wont to weare their locks out, yet so, that their Temples, notwithstanding the same, and the beauty thereof might be seene. And these are said to be like a *piece of Pomegranate*, that is, of a ruddy and beautifull colour. Now under this similitude is set forth the modesty, shamesfastnesse, and chastity of the Spouse. This also hath been Expounded before in Chap. 4. 3. but we must know this is no vaine or idle repetition, but as having regard to the Spouse, and that in a double consideration. The first is to shew her, that notwithstanding her offence he loveth her still as before, which also causeth him to use the same words here as before. Secondly, because he

he knew how hard a thing it was for the Spouse to believe, and therefore for the strengthening of her weaknesse she doubleth the words by way of repetition. Thus much for Christs commending his Spouse for her beauty : Now he proceedeth to commend her by comparing her with others, in the next verse.

V E R S. 5.

There are threescore Queens, and fourscore Concubines, and Virgins without number.

IN these words we have a more ample declaration of the glorious beauty and rich deckings of the Spouse, and that not onely in respect of her self, but in comparison above all others. Those to whom she is compared, are 1. *Queens* 60. 2. *Concubines* 80. 3. *Virgins without number.*

This declaration of the Churches beauty by way of comparison, is least she might seem to be disquieted in her mind, doubting that she is not in such speciall favour with Christ, as he hath profest unto her, because there are a multitude of other assemblies in the world, which by their outward, flourishing estate & freedom from all such terrors, both outward and inward, seem to be respected above her, & may seem in comparison of them to be lesse beautiful. His answer is for her better satisfaction, that there are indeed so many *Queens* & *Concubines*, & *Damsels*; yet she alone is acceptable unto him, he regardeth not them nor their beauty, but the Spouse is that *onely one* that is gracious in his sight, she is his *Dove* and chaste Spouse, she is his *Undeiled*, being cleansed and washed.

There are threescore Queens, &c.

We may understand these words affirmatively, *They are*

are sixty, or by supposition, *Be there sixty Queenes?* that is, though there were sixty *Queenes*, and eighty *Concubines*, &c. yet my Dove is but one, as it followeth. And for the numbers, *threescore* and *four score*, it is not certaine whether the allusion be to *Solomons wives and concubines* which he tooke at first, before he increased them to seven hundred wives, and three hundred *concubines*, as in *1 Kings* 11. 3. as wee heard in Chap. 3. 7. where mention was made of threescore mighty men of *Israel*, that stand about *Solomons* bed. Or rather, whither a certaine number be not put for an uncertain, meaning many *Queenes*, more *Concubines* and innumerable *Damofels*, as *seven shepheards*, and eight *Princes*, in *Mic.* 5. 5. So *six* and *seaven troubles*, in *Job.* 3. 19. signifie many, and no definite number.

Queens were such, as were the chiefe wives of *Princes*, which they tooke into fellowship by solemne stipulation, and with consent and solemne rejoycing of friends: these bring dowries to their *Husbands*, and are such as have the government of the house with their husbands, and the like.

Concubines were secondary wives, taken for propagation of Children, but they bare no rule in the familie as wives, neither had their Children such right to inherit, as the others had, but were sent away with gifts, as is apparent by *Abrahams* practise, *Gen.* 25. 5. 6. The Hebrew word *pilegesb*, (whereof the Greek *Palakis*, and Latine *pellex* is borrowed, which we call a *Concubine*) signifieth a *halse wife*, or a *divided* and *secondary Wife*, which was a wife only for the bed, but not for honour and government, and which were married without any solemnitie, or betrothing of matrimonie. *Solomons* wives were *Princesses*, and so were not his *Concubines*,

1 Kings 11. 3. Such a Concubine was Hagar to Abraham, and Keturah his second wife is called a Concubine, Gen. 25. 6. And Bilha, and Zilpha, were Concubines to Jacob, Gen. 35. 22. And many other men of note had Concubines, as Caleb, Manasses, Gideon, David, Rohoboam, with many others.

Damofels were such, as were not married at all, but accompany and attend upon Queenes, and other great women, as in Ps. 45. 15. The Virgins are called the *companions*, to wit, of the Queen See Est. 2. 9. Suppose now that these Queens and Concubines, and their Maids of honour attending upon them, were as a man would say, without number or innumerable, yet should they not be able to match the Spouse for beauty, comelines, and glorie, but should even of their owne accord, give her place before them all: yea, though there be many Queenes of great dignitie, and attyred with costly things, and Concubines that were beautifull, and in rich attire according to the glory of Princes, and these with their Maids of honour attending upon them: so that set all these together in all their glorie, beautie, riches, yet they are nothing comparable to the Spouse whose beautie and glorie farre excelleth them all, for, it is added in the next verse, *My Dove is but one*, &c.

Hence Observe.

That all outward and worldly glory is not comparable to the spirituall excellency and glory of the Saints.

The Birth or the honour of the Queenes, the beautie and deckings of the Concubines, and virgins, is great and of high esteeme in the world; but it is not comparable to the honour, beautie, and rich ornaments of the Spouse of Christ; for she is cloathed with the glorious spirit of God, she stands adorned with the robes

robes of his righteoufneffe and glorie. The particulars of the honour and glorie of the Spouse, are mentioned in the next verse.

VERS. 6

My Dove, my undefiled is but one, shee is the only one of her Mother, she is the choice one of her that beare her; the daughters saw her, and blessed her, yea, the Queenes and the Concubines, and they praised her.

IN this verse Christ gives a particular description of the severall excellencies of the Spouse, and how shee is incomparable honourable, beautifull, and glorious above all others, and this is declared,

First, What she is to Christ.

1. A Dove.
2. Undefiled.
3. She is but *one*.

Secondly, To her Mother, she is,

1. Her *only one*.
2. Her *choice one*.

Thirdly, What she was to others, to wit, the Queenes and Concubines above mentioned.

1. The Daughters blessed her.
2. The Queenes and Concubines commended her.

My Dove, my undefiled is one, &c.

A Dove hath been noted for chastitie, and mildnes, or innocency; but in what sence the Spouse is compared to a Dove, hath been often times declared before: as in Chap. 2. 14. And Chap. 5. 1. So that wee need not stand upon it here. Its added.

My Undeſiled, or, my perfect one : that is, one that is waſhed and cleaned, and made compleate in Chriſt. See this alſo expounded in Chap. 5. 2. But the next commendation is,

She is but one.

She is one, or, *There is (but) one my Dove*, and ſo this only one, is oppoſed to the many Queenes and Concubines forementioned, though it were the glorie of the other to be many; yet the glorie of the Spouſe is, that ſhe is Chriſts *only one*.

The Spouſe is ſaid to be alone, as wee ſay in our ſpeech, an odd one, both becauſe ſhee was choſen by God, out of all the people and Nations of the world, and was moſt deare unto him: and alſo becauſe compared with others, none of them could come nigh her to match with her.

Hence Obſerve.

That the Spouſe is that only one, whom Chriſt doth preferre before the multitude of others, which in the worlds eſteeme ſeeme never ſo glorious.

It is common in the world, for the wicked to magnifie themſelves, as in Revel. 18. 7. where it is ſaid, *Babylon did much glorifie her ſelfe, and lived deliciously, for ſhe ſaith in her heart, I ſit a Queene, and am no Widdow, and ſhall ſee no ſorrow, therefore ſhall her plagues in one day, death, mourning, and famine, &c.* See alſo Iſa. 47. 7. But the Spouſe ſhe is that one, that only one whom Chriſt hath reſpect unto. Thus it was ſaid of Iſrael. *And who is like thy people, like Iſrael, one Nation in the earth whom God went to redeeme for a people to himſelfe, &c.* 2 Sam. 7. 23. And the Lord in reſpect of the Covenant he made with them, ſpeakes thus, *If yee will obey my voice indeed, and keep my Covenant; then yee ſhall be a pe-*

culiar treasure unto me, above all peoples, for all the earth is mine, *Exod. 19. 5.* Thus it is with the Spouse; as there is one body, one spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, &c. So there is but one Spouse, who is only glorious; who is only chosen and beloved, who is only deare and precious in Christs eyes. So much for the glorie of the Spouse, as in relation to Christ. It followeth.

She is the only one of her Mother, she is the choice one of her that beare her.

She is the only one of her Mother, or, one she is to her Mother, by which is meant, she is most tenderly beloved, as only Children are, see *Judg. 11. 34.* And *Luke 8. 42.* And also that she had or should have a most rich and precious portion, as the only Child or heire of her mother. By her *Mother*, here is meant the heavenly *Jerusalem*, mentioned *Gal. 4. 26.* which was prefigured by *Sarah* the free woman, the only wife of *Abraham*, of whom he had his only Sonne *Isaac*, the child of promise; and though he had other Children by his Concubines, *Agar* and *Keturah*, unto whom he gave gifts, and sent them away, yet unto *Isaac* he gave all that he had, *Gen. 25. 5, 6.* Now *Agar* typified Mount *Sinai*, law, letter, and bondage, for she is in bondage with her Children, *Gal. 4. 25.* but *Sarah* was a type of the new Testament, and of *Jerusalem* which is above, is free, which is the mother of us all, *Gal. 4. 26.* And therefore in *Isaac*, the Sonne of the free woman, was *Abrahams* seed called, of whom are the Children of the promise, and heires of salvation, *Gal. 4. 22.* Now in that here is mention made of the mother of the Spouse, we may remember as I have heretofore told you, that in the Hebrew phrase, the whole is called the mother, and the parts

or members are called the Daughters : So the new *Jerusalem*, the Church of the first borne is called the mother, and the Members and branches thereof are called the Daughters : the holy seed is likened to a daughter, espoused to Christ, belonging to the heavenly *Jerusalem*, the mother of the faithfull only. It's added.

She is the choice one of her that beare her.

The choice one, or the cleare (the pure) one, as the word is rendred in the next verse, *cleare as the Sonne*. The Hebrew word *Barah*, signifieth, pure and cleane from filthinesse, purged, polished, seperated, and select from others : the word is used for choice, in *1 Chron. 7. 40.* And also for purging by affliction, in *Dan. 11. 35.* and *12. 10.* so that we may reade it, *even that pure, that cleane, or that chosen one, to her that beare her.* This denotes, that the Spouse is only beloved, as only Children are, that she is high and honourable in her birth, that she is heir to a rich and glorious portion.

Hence Observe.

That the Saints are rich and glorious in their parentage.

The birth, or honour touching the parentage of *Queenes*, and the beautie and deckings of *Concubines*, and *Virgines*, is great and highly esteemed in the world, but it is not comparable to the honour, beautie, and rich ornaments of the Spouse, she standeth alone in all excellency. It is a thing of great account in the world, to be daughter of a mighty Prince : but what is the dignitie of their birth, if it be compared with the dignitie and honour of the birth of the Spouse? It is a divine and heavenly birth, the Saints are borne of God, and receive honour from him. The Spouse is the only one of her mother, to wit, *Jerusalem that is from*

above, who is the mother of all the Saints in the world, and unto none else, all that be the Children of the most high. Thus wee see, how for dignitie and honour in birth, she farre excelleth all the Queenes in the world. But now the Spouse is not only excellent to Christ, as a Dove, undefiled, and his only one, and that she is one, pure, and chosen of her Mother, the heavenly Jerusalem: but also she is excellent to others that be strangers, as appears in the next words.

The daughters saw her and blessed her; yea, the Queenes, and the Concubines, and they praised her.

The daughters saw her, or, so soone as the daughters saw her. By Daughters here are meant the Virgins or Damosels forementioned in the former verse, and such as were spoken of in Chap. 2. 2. He meaneth by this speech, that the beautie of the Spouse is so excellent, that even at the first sight and beholding, they were constrained to confesse her, to be the most excellent and beautifull of the world: for its added.

They blessed her, or, they called her blessed: that is, accounted her happy, as one endued with rare and wonderfull graces, even for the things which they saw at the first sight and blush in her. The like phraze wee have in Luk. 1. 48. *And all generations shall call me blessed,* And in Jam. 5. 11. *Wee count them happy which endure,* &c. To blesse is more then to praise, praise is the acknowledging any good thing in her, but blessing is the acknowledgment. It followeth.

The Queenes and the concubines and they praised her.

Even the Queenes and Concubines, to wit, mentioned in the former verse, praised her, to wit, for the excellent

ellent grace's and parts that were in her.

The Virgins that he spake of, that doe behold the beautie of the Queenes and Concubines, yea, and they looke upon their owne attire and riches: and they account these, great things: but so soone as ever they behold the Spouse, she so dimmeth all their beautie and glorie, so that they set their eyes upon her, and pronounce her blessed: yea, the Queenes and Concubines also, which glorie in their owne pompe and glorie, toll her.

Hence Observe.

That the Saints being clothed with the Spirit and glorie of Christ, are the admiration of the world. Such is the privilege of the Saints, that many times prophane worldlings are forced to peferre the state of the godly before their owne, and to wish they were like unto them. As Saul, Pharaoh, Balaam, and others: sometimes the Saints have been made so honourable, by the appearance of God among them, even in the sight of men, that the very heathen Nations have confessed that they were happy, God had done great things for them; thus Israel of old was praised and accounted happy, for the manifold blessings of God upon her, whom he hath made high, above all Nations which he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour, Deut. 26. 19. And againe Moses saith, in Gen. 4. 6. *This is your wisdom, and your understanding, in the eyes of the people; which shall heare, at these statutes and say, surely this great Nation, is a wise and understanding people.* And the people are said to magnifie the Disciples, in Act. 5. 13.

Now

Now for the particulars wherein these doe so much praise and commend the Spouse, are expressed in the next words.

V E R S. 7.
Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, faire as the Moone, cleare as the Sunne, and terrible as an Army with Banners.

Here the praises forespoken of, are set forth most gloriously, or a new state of the Church is described. They propound this Question, saying,

Who is she, &c.

They were not ignorant, or in doubt who she was, but by this manner of speech is noted her excellency. See the like demand in *Psal. 24. 8.* Also *Psal. 77. 13.* where they demand thus, *Who is so great a God as our God?* And so it was said of Christ, *What manner of man is this?* *Mark 4. 41.* & *Mat. 8. 27.* So here, *Who is she?* She is so beautifull and glorious that we know not what to resemble her unto. And this glory of the Spouse is set forth by fowre excellent comparisons.

1. As the *Morning* for her beauty and freshnesse.
2. As the *Moone* for fairnesse and light.
3. As the *Sunne* for her brightnesse and clearenesse.
4. As an *Army with terrible banners*, for fortitude.

1. The Spouse is resembled to the *morning*, *Who is this looketh forth as the morning*, that is, lightsom, bright, and chearfull. The morning we know is fresh and comfortable, also glorious and beautifull, as in respect of the lively and cleare colours thereof, and doth, as a man would say, more and more increase in light; so that the Spouse is not compared, neither to the night,
 nor

nor to the dawing of the day, or day breake, but even to the glory and beauty of the morning it selfe. As the morning is comfortable after the dark night, so is the divine presence of Christ to the soul, after the dark night of sin, ignorance, and affliction.

Hence Note,

That divine presence in the souls of the Saints, is very sweet and comfortable. It is like the breaking forth of the morning, after a dark stormy night. When the soul hath been in darknesse without light, in affliction, sorrow, ignorance, and blindnesse, and then to be filled with the divine presence of Christ, for the Lord to breake forth then in light and glory; how sweet, how comfortable, how glorious will such an appearance of God be to the soul? thus it's said to the Church, *Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee, and the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and Kings to the brightness of thy rising,* Isa. 60. 1. 3. The Prophet doth here allude to that glory that sometimes appeared upon the Mount, *Exod. 24. 15.* And upon the Tabernacle, *Exod. 40. 32.* And the Temple, *1 Kings 8. 11.* So that when darknesse shall cover the Earth, and grosse darknesse the people, the presence of God with his people shall be life, light, and glory unto them. When the Lord promiseth prosperity to his people he saith, *Then shall thy light breake forth as the morning,* Isa. 58. 8. So much for the first comparison: The second followeth,

Faire as the Moone.

The Moone in her full, or most glorious shew, seemeth to be a most glorious Creature indeed: it's called in Hebrew *Lebanah*, of her whitenesse and glorious bright;

bright, shining. When abundance of glory and light is promised to the Church, God saith, *Thy Sunne shall no more goe downe, neither shall thy Moone withdraw it self,* Isa. 60. 20. *And the light of the Moone shall be as the light of the Sunne, and the light of the Sunne shall be seaven fold,* Isa. 30. 26. The Moone is faire and light by that beauty and brightnesse communicated to her from the Sunne. In the Sunnes brightnesse she hath her light.

Hence Observe,

That the Saints are beautifull, and shine in the glory and light of God. As the Moone receives all her light from the Sunne, so doe the Saints receive all their life, light, and glory from Christ the anointed one of the Father. The Apostles said of Christ, *We saw his glory as the glory of the onely begotten of the Father,* John 1. 12. Christ shined in the glory of his Father, and the Saints shine in the glory of Christ: they receive all their grace and light from him. *Of his fullnesse we all receive, and grace for grace,* John 1. 16. As Christ lived in his Fathers bosome, and councill, acted in his power, and stood in his righteousness: So the Saints live in the secrets of the Almighty, and partake of the righteousness of God in Christ, they shine in the same glory & excellency as Christ did. But now the Moon, though she be cleare and receive much light from the Sun, yet sometimes the light and glory of the Sunne is eclipsed from her: neither is she so perfectly cleare, but sometimes she hath spots, therefore it is not only said, that the Spouse is faire as the Moone, but it's added,

Cleare as the Sunne.

Here are the degrees of grace, the Spouse is made partaker of; her first light is like the morning, or dawn-

dawning of the day, the second beauty like the Moon, which borroweth her light of the Sunne; the third degree like the Sunne it selfe in brightnesse. The Spouse is cleare, or pure as the Sunne, as it is said. *The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more untill the perfect day*, Prov. 4. 18. He meaneth not that the Spouse is alone, and simply, as the Sunne hath not her light from any other, but that she is glorious and wonderfull of majesty, and that she stands in the same glory and majesty as Christ did. In Christs transfiguration it's said, that *his face did shine as the Sun*, Mat. 17. 2. & *Revel. 1. 16*. It is said, that *his face shone as the Sun shineth in his strength*. In a word, under these speeches the holy spirit would not onely note the growth of the Spouse, by comparing her to the morning, but the excellency and glory of her by resembling her to the Moone, yea, to the Sunne, the most excellent and glorious of all the heavenly Creatures that we doe behold. Christ himselfe is the Sunne of righteousness, in whose glory and excellency the Church shines. Hence Observe,

That the glory and excellency of the Saints is the same with the excellency and glory of Christ.

The Spouse is not onely like the joyfull morning, pleasant and comfortable, and like the Moone that receives light from another, but is also glorious and excellent as the Sun of righteousness himselfe. The Saints are said to *put on Christ*, Gal. 3. 27. *As the woman (which is the Spouse) is clothed with the Sun*, Rev. 12. 1. That is, she is clothed with Christ with his righteousness and glory. Thus the Armies which were in Heaven following Christ, are said to be *cloathed in fine linnen, white and cleane*, R. v. 19. 11. They

are cloathed with the same anointings, and the same spirit, that Christ is, as the Apostle testifieth, that *as he is (to wit, Christ) so are we in this present world,* 1 John 4. 17. The last commendations in the verse followeth.

And terrible as an Army with banners.

The Spouse was glorious in her terrour and fortitude, she was an amazement and trembling to all her spirituall enemies, pulling downe with spirituall weapons *Strong holds*, &c. 2 Cor. 10. 4. The people of *Israel* were a type of the spirituall Church, who were a people saved by the Lord the shield of their helpe, and the sword of their excellency, Deut. 33. 29. God cast the dread of them, and the feare of them upon the Nations under the whole Heaven, who heard the report of them and trembled, Deut. 2. 25. The people heard and were afraid, sorrow tooke hold on the Inhabitants of *Palestina*; the Dukes of *Edom* were amazed, the mighty men of *Moab* trembling, took hold upon them, all the Inhabitants of *Canaan* melted away, feare and dread fell upon them, by the greatnesse of thine arme they shall be as still as a stone, &c. Exod. 15. 15, 16. Having spoken of this more largely in the first verse of this Chapter, I shall passe it here, and proceed.

V E R S. 8.

I went downe into the Garden of Nuts, to see the fruits of the Valley, and to see whether the Vine flourished, and the Pomegranates budded.

THese words containe an answer to an objection: The objection may be thus framed according to

to the answer. How commeth it then that you withdrew your ſelfe from me, if not becauſe you would forſake me for my former negligence?

His answer is, that he went for other ends.

1. To viſite his Garden, and ſee the fruits of the Valley, &c.

2. To call her back from her mourning and dolefull wandring.

The firſt is declared.

First, By the place unto which Chriſt went: he did not altogether depart from his Spouſe, but went into the Garden, that is, into the Aſſemblies and meetings of his Church.

Secondly, This is farther explained by the ends for which he went downe into his Garden, which was,

First, to ſee the plants of the Valley, to wit, humble ſpirits, and ſuch as are nothing in themſelves, but rely wholly upon grace.

Secondly, to ſee all the Members of his Church: both ſuch as reſemble the Vine, if they were towards the fruits of righteouſneſſe, and alſo ſuch as reſemble the Pomegranate Tree, if they were but budding forth, as it were.

I went downe into the Garden of Nuts,

Chriſt maketh mention of going downe unto her; he ſpeaketh of a time paſt, even that time which is mentioned in the former Chapter, when he found her a ſleep. The Spouſe is called a Garden, *I went downe to the Garden.* And here it is Translated, *The Garden of Nuts*, being generally ſo taken by the Hebrew Rabbies. The word *Egiz* is not found in all the

Scripture, but in this place. We may take it for those aromaticall Trees and fruits (such as Christ's Gardens are planted with, Chap. 4. 12, 13.) and so it's to be understood of that fruit which we call Nutmegs, and the like.

Or, we may take the words thus, *I came downe to the faire dressed Garden.* For *Egoz* which is taken to be the Nut, may be derived of *Gazaz*, which signifieth to cut, or sheare. And so it seemeth most fit to take it thus, and it rather standeth both with the etimology of the Hebrew word, and also most agreeable to the circumstance of the place, because afterwards he mentioneth *Vines*. *Pomegranates*, and such like, with which men are wont to plant their Gardens, and not so commonly with Nut Trees, which are not so much of account and estimation. And so I say we may take it, *I went downe into the dressed Garden*, for by this speech may be understood all the cost and labour which the Lord bestowed upon his Vineyard, by planting, watering, dressing, and bestowing all manner of labour and cost upon it, that it might be fruitfull: In this the Lord shewed that he did not out of loathsomnesse and wrath desert from his Spouse, but rather of a very earnest desire that he had to finish the heavenly marriage betweene them, and therefore he comes down to make her as a well-dressed Garden.

Hence Observe,

That Christ doth not withdraw from his Spouse in everlasting displeasure, but rather to manifest his everlasting love unto her. Hence it is that Christ saith here, *I am come downe into my Garden*, he speaketh according to the manner of men, who in the Summer time come to

see.

see their workes thrive and prosper : so that it is as much, as if Christ had said, Thou shouldst not have been dismayd (O my Spouse) that I departed from thee, for therein I deale but with thee, as good Gardeners and Vine-dressers deale with Orchards, gardens, and vineyards, who comming (perhaps before the time of fruit) to looke for fruit, and finding none depart, not for ever, but till another convenient season, when they may receive fruit. So that Christ will not lose his labour and cost bestowed upon his Spouse, then owners of their gardens and orchards : but he will come expecting fruit, and making fruitfull, as the following words doe farther hold forth, where wee have the end of Christs going downe to his garden ; to wit:

To see the fruits of the valley, and to see whether the Vine flourished, and Pomegranates budded.

To see the fruits of the valley, &c. there had been much bestowed upon the Spouse to make her fruitfull, and now Christ takes a view of her fruitfulness, to see whether she answered the labour and cost he did bestow upon her.

Fruits here properly meane, the Greene, or first ripe fruits, such as are come to maturitie at the beginning of the yeare, or spring time ; so that after the cold stormie winter of darkenesse, ignorance, and tribulation, comes the chearefull Spring of grace, and glorie in the Church. But it is added.

The fruits of the valley

The Hebrew word here translated valley, signifieth a River, or Brooke, and a Valley also, through which a River or Brooke, did, or might runne; because men commonly plant there, as in a place they take to be most plenti-

plentifull and fruitfull: so that the Church is situate low, as in a valley, or streams where pools and streams of water are, to make them fruitfull. It was the custome of men in the hot easterne Countries, to plant gardens and Orchards neere streames and pooles of water, as wee may see in Eccles. 2. 6. And Ezek. 31. 45. It followeth.

To see whether the Vine flourished, and the Pomegranates budded.

Those that plant Vineyards and Orchards, &c. they doe not only looke to see the growth of their grafts and plants; but also their fruits, whether they were then ripe: so he, speaking after the manner of men, did wait whether his Spouse were glorious in fruitfulness, whereof he had forerunning signes, even as the flourishing of the Vine, and budding of the Pomegranates, were tokens of the winter past, and the Summer comming on: which order Christ observeth, Mat. 24. 32. So the whole sum of this verse is thus much; that Christ visited his Church, to this end to make her fruitfull, and then comes expecting of fruit from her, even fruits of union and communion.

Hence note.

First, That Christ useth all meanes to make his Church a fruitfull Spouse. For, he doth visit her, and plants her in the valley, to wit, in the midst of streames of living water.

Secondly note.

When Christ hath used meanes to make his Spouse fruitfull, he expects fruit from her.

He comes to his Spouse, and doth observe the time, even the time of springing, when the Plants and Trees sprout

sprout and bud, and their fruits begin to appeare: for both the obfervations, fee *Iſa.* 5. 1, 2, 3. But notwithstanding Chriſt did thus expect fruit from his Spouſe, yet ſometimes ſhe is faulty, and doth not answer Chriſts expectation, and Chriſt ſeemes to tell the Spouſe, that by reaſon of her former ſleepie condition, there was no ſuch flourishing of the plants, as ought to have been, as appeareth by the next verſe.

V E R S. 9

Or ever I was aware, my ſoule made me like the Chariots of Amminadab.

WEE may take theſe words to be the continued ſpeech of Chriſt: or, (as ſome thinke) to be ſpoken of the Spouſe. If wee take them for the words of Chriſt, the ſenſe will be thus.

Or, ever I was aware, or, I knew not, or, wee may reade When I perceived not theſe things. viz. the Vine to flourish, and the Pomegranate to bud, &c. when I perceived not ſuch a flourishing of plants, as ought to have been: then Chriſt puts in his helping hand, as in the following words.

My ſoule made me like the Chariots of Amminadab
My ſoule made me, or my ſoule put me; that is, my loving affection and tender heart, put me upon ſome means to help my people. This manner of ſpeech noteth an earneſt deſire, and ſtrong affections, *as my ſoule loveth, Chap. 1. 7. and my ſoule hateth, Iſa. 1. 14. My ſoule is joyful, Iſa. 61. 10.* And the like. Chriſt hereby declareth with what earneſt affections he was ſtirred up to awake and help his Spouſe: he doth not love to ſee her in a darke low condition, but makes haſt to comfort her,
 which

which is expressed by the following metaphors.

My soule made me like the Chariots, &c.

Made me like, or, set me upon Chariots; that is, yeilded me good and sure meanes to be carryed and borne up. The peoples conversion unto Christ, is called a bringing of them *Upon horses, and Chariots, for an offering unto the Lord, Isa. 66. 20.* So that Christ is as Chariots to his people, to help and sustaine them by his Spirit: Chariots were used in warres, *Joshua 11. 4.* and when God threatneth vengeance unto the wicked, he saith, he will come with his Chariots like a *whirle-wind*, to render his anger, &c. And the Propets of old, were called, the *horsemen and Chariots of Israel, 2 King. 2. 17.* All which notes that they were for strength and support, by these Christ is here said to carrie, sustaine, and succour his people. Neither doth this only note the meanes of Christs comming to help his Spouse but in the following words, the speed that he made.

The Chariots of Amminadab.

The Hebrew *Amminadab* signifieth *my willing people*, or, *my princely and noble people*: that is, As they that be my bounteous, noble, and free-hearted people, do the things that they doe cheerefully, and therefore with the more expedition and speed then others: so I came cheerefully, and with a ready mind, after I had once resolved upon the matter, to see and comfort my Spouse. Thus Christs people are said to be a *willing people in the day of his power, Psal. 110. 3.* that is, they are sustained with a free or princely spirit. The verse being opened, let us observe hence.

First, *that Christ absenteth himselfe from his Spouse, no longer*

longer then it shall be for her good. For here he saith, *When I perceived not those things, to wit, the Vines to flourish, &c. My soule set me, &c.* I was restlesse untill I came to visit my Spouse. It is with Christ, as it was with Joseph, who though he refrained for a while from his Brethren, yet he could not long conceale, but he must disclose himself unto them : so though Christ doth sometime seem to withdraw from his people for a while, and that for their good, yet he absents himself no longer, then needs he must, and after returnes with larger manifestations of his love and favour then before he shewed.

Secondly, Observe.

When Christ comes to raise his people out of a low and darke condition, he comes with power, strength and speed. My soule made me like the Chariots, &c. Chariots are for strength and speed. Christ comes to comfort and support, as with Chariots.

Thirdly, *Christs people are a bounteous, noble, willing, and free hearted people.*

These are they that follow the Lamb, and serve the Lord freely and willingly, and not of necessitie and constraint : so its said of Christs Subjects, in *Psal. 110. 3. his people shall be willing in the day of his power*, then there needs no coaction or compulsion used to draw them, to the obedience of Christ, but they are drawne by the Scepter of his Spirit, swaying their hearts by the sweet drawing of his Spirit, and grace.

It followeth, as before Christ had declared his purpose and resolution of his returning to the Church to comfort her and support her : so now he sheweth what he spake, when he came to her, in the next verse.

VERS. 10.

Returne, returne, O Shulamite, returne, returne, that wee may looke upon thee: what will wee see in the Shulamite? as it were the company of two Armies.

IN the former verse, Christ declared his earnest affection, and willingnesse to visit, and comfort his people, which thing is made more manifest herein this verse, by the description he maketh of his recalling her, and of the effects following.

Christs recalling of the Spouse is declared.

1. By the manner.

2. By the matter.

In the manner we may note.

First, The earnest affections of Christ, in that he doubleth his expression, saying, *returne, returne, &c.* and this doubled twice, to shew the earnestnesse and certainty of his desire.

Secondly, By the Epithite Christ is pleased to give his Spouse, calling her *Shulamite*, which is from her peace and perfection.

As for the matter, it is, that the Spouse should returne to her former feeling and comfort in Christ, and this is declared by the end, to wit, *That we may looke upon thee*, that Christ & his friends, may behold the beautie and glorie of the Spouse.

Lastly, The effect of all is this, that Christ and his friends doe admire her glorie, which admiration is expressed, by a question, and an answer.

The Question is, *What shall wee see in the Shulamite?*

The answer is, *as it were the company of two Armies.*

Returne,

Returne, returne, &c.

These are the words of Christ, unto his Spouse, who in seeking of him, had, as one would say, gone beyond him. And this calling of her back againe, is expressed unto us under the similitude of an earthly man, who as it were a farre off, calleth and shouteth, even as loud as he can, by words and speech, to bring back such as wander out of the right way, hereby is signified the earnestnesse of Christ, to call home his Spouse unto himselfe.

Hence Observe.

1. First That Christs voice is an effectuall meanes to convert us unto himselfe.

Christs voice speakes spirit and life to the hearers; for his words are spirit and life. And therefore Christ himselfe saith, in Joh. 5. 25, 28. That the houre was comming, and then was, when the dead shall heare the voice of the Sonne of God, and they that heare shall live, and they that are in the graves (of sin, ignorance, earth, and flesh) shall heare his voice and come forth, &c.

Secondly Observe.

When Christ calls any by his voice, to returne unto him he calls earnestly and effectually.

When Christ commeth and calleth at the doores of our hearts, he will take no deniall, he will not be put off with any delays or denials whatsoever: but makes his voice to be heard, and calls aloud, untill we heare, and returne unto him. Here he doth as it were double and treble his speech, by repeating the word *returne*, four times. Now followeth the title he giveth the Spouse.

O Shulamite.

Under this title, he declareth the peace and perfection of the Spouse, as *Solomon* (which in Hebrew *Shelomo*) had his name of peace, because he was a figure of Christ, the Prince of peace, and *Jerusalem* was also called *Shalem*, or *Salem*, *Psal.* 76. 3. which signifieth peace, *Heb.* 7. 2. So here the Spouse, called upon to returne, is named *shulamite*, or *Shulamitess*, of her peace with God in Christ. Now because this hath some reference to *Jerusalem*, some doe apply this to the calling of the *Jews*, as it's foretold, *Rom.* 11. 25. But wee may apply it to the new *Jerusalem*, the generall assembly, and Church of the first borne. And then it notes the peace and perfections of the Spouse.

Hence observe.

That the Saints are perfect in peace and union with Christ.

Christ hath raised his Saints, by the lively quickning voice of his spirit, and hath made them sit together with himselfe in heavenly places, *Ephes.* 3. 6. And the Saints are said to be, compleat in Christ, *Col.* 2. 10. And to be compleat in the will of God, *Col.* 4. 12. Againe.

Secondly Observe,

That Christ useth all manner of sweet and loving speeches, to perswade his Spouse to returne unto him.

Here he saith, *O my Shulamite*, or, *my perfect one*, for all which see before in Chap. 5. 1. where he saith, *my love, my dove, my undefiled, &c.*

Thus much for the manner of Christ's speech. Now for the matter of it, that she might returne to feele her former comfort, which is declared by the end: to wit.

Tha.

That we may looke upon thee.

That we may looke upon thee, or, let us see (or view) thee: this meaneth a looking on with *delight*, and *joy*. Now Christ speaketh this in his owne name, and the name of his friends whom he mentioned before, *vers. 9.* for he is desirous that they also with him selfe, may be partakers of the beauty and glory of the Spouse: this being also spoken, according to earthly customes, for as the Bridegroom hath his friends, whom he would make partakers of the glory of his Bride, so the Bride hath hers, whom she would be glad to have beholders of her excellency and glory likewise. The friends of the Bride are her fellow-members, whom she would make partakers with her selfe, to behold the majesty and glory of Christ her head. The Bridegroomes friends may be said to be the same, whom he would have to behold the glory, riches, and inward beauty of his Spouse. Thus the faithfull are called the friends of Christ, in *John 15. 15.*

Hence Observe,

That Christ delighteth that him selfe and his friends, should behold the excellency, riches, and beauty of his Saints. Returne, that we may behold thee, that we may see thy inward beauty and glory. It is sin that obscureth the Saints, but it is the riches of grace and glory that Christ delighteth to see in his Saints. The end of all this followeth, to wit, the admiring of the Churches glory.

What shall we see in the Shulamite? As it were the company of two Armies.

Christ turneth his speech to his friends, by asking
of:

of this question, *what shall we see, &c.* or, *would you looke, &c.* This question is onely to stir up attention and affection in the hearers, that they might be witnesses of the Churches glory. This is exprest by way of demand, the answer is made by Christ himself.

As it were the company of two Armies.

חור
Chorus dan-
ces, or
Flutes;
sometime
it signifies
the com-
pany it
selfe of
Dancers.

As the company, or, as the dance: that is, a company of dancers that leap and dance for joy. It is said concerning the peoples spirituall deliverance, *O Virgine of Israel, &c. then shall goe forth in the dance of them that make merry: then shall the Virgines rejoyce in a dance,* Jer. 31. 4. 13. So it notes joy and rejoycing like the company, or dance of two Armies.

Of two Armies.

The Hebrew *Mahanaim* signifieth the company of two Armies, or, two Camps that meet. When Jacob met Laban, Genes. 32. 1, 2. the Angells of God met him, and when Jacob saw them, he said, *This is the Lords Host*, and called the place *Mahanaim*. Unto this joyfull meeting of these two Armies of Jacob, doth Christ liken his Spouse unto. Hence Note, *That the meeting of Christ and his Saints, is a joyfull meeting.* It is like the meeting of Jacob and his Army of Angells. The Spouse is let forth by an excellent order, like a company of Armies pitching their Tents. The coming in of the Saints unto Christ is like a troupe of dancers, like unto that number, and with the same joy, wherein the people returning to David, did receive him with great joy and comfort, as he did comfortably entertaine them; and all this

was done at *Mahanaim*, as appeareth, 2 *Sam.* 19. And thus Christ comforteth his Spouse, and rejoyceth himselfe by beholding of her holinesse and glory: here is a most joyfull meeting, a glorious sight. Thus endeth the sixth Chapter.

Canticles

Canticles.

Chap 7. Vers. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, &c.

How beautifull are thy goings with Shoes, O Princes Daughter? The joynts of thy Thighs are like Jewells, the worke of the bands of a cunning Work-man.

Thy Navell is like a round Goblet, which wanteth not liquor: thy Belly is like an heap of Wheat set about with Lillies.

Thy two Breasts are like two young Roes that are Twins.

Thy Neck is a Tower of Ivory, thine eyes like the Fish-pools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bath-rabbim: Thy Nose is as the Tower of Lebanon, which looketh toward Damascus.

Thine head upon thee is like Carmel, and the haire of thy head like purple: The King is held in the Galleries, &c.



HERE'S another commendation of the Spouse by her severall parts: If it be demanded why it is so, seing there is no new thing fallen out between the former commendation and this? The answer is this, here is a new occasion notwithstanding, of praising the Spouse: for the former was to comfort her, and to raise her up after her affliction and sorrow, by assuring her that she was even as precious and beautifull in his eyes, as she was before her unkind dealing. And now having in a short digression answered all the doubts that the Spouse

Spouse might make, shewing that his withdrawing himselfe was for her good, even to call her to a more neer communion with himselfe. And now this commendations which is from the feet to the head, sheweth how comely and delectable she was in her returning unto him; so that here is declared the judgement that Christ still retaineth of his Spouse, by prosecuting the commendation of her, in the rest of her members: to wit, *Her Feet, her Thighs, her Navell, her Belly, her Breasts, her Neck, her Eyes, her Head, her Stature, her Mouth*, and now her heart is settled and established, she resteth secured that Christ and she shall never be separated, that she shall never fall from grace, neither will her beloved fall from his love.

The particular members of the Spouse are here described in another order then before, in Chap. 4. and Chap. 6. for there the commendations began at her head, and so descended to her lower parts, even to her feet; but here it begins at her feet, and to other parts upward unto her head.

Some thinke this description was made by the friends of the Spouse, spoken of in the former Chapter, because Christ is spoken of as another or third person, as in Verf. 5. & 9. but we may take it for the continued speech of Christ, making an end of the commendations that he began in the former Chapter. Let us come to the particulars themselves.

How beautifull are thy feet with Shoes, O Princes Daughter

The *Shulamite* or Spouse of Christ is here admired for her beauty and Ornaments, that her beloved hath furnished her withall, and it's expressed thus.

R r r r

How

How beautifull are thy feet, &c.

The feet are the instruments of walking too and fro, we may read, *How beautifull are thy goings, &c.* Sometimes by the feet are meant sound affections, as in *Eccles. 4.* but here we may take it for her obedience and faith, and walking in the truth, being now set free by the Sonne, as in *John 8. 32.* walking in the liberty of Christ, *Gal. 5. 1.* And it's added,

How beautifull are thy feet with shooes.

To goe bare-footed was a signe of Captivity and affliction, *Isa. 20. 4. 2 Sam. 15. 30.* And when the Lord mentions his favours to the Church, he saith, *I shod thee with badgers skin, Ezek. 16. 10.* The feet of those that preach the Gospell are said to be beautifull, *Rom. 10. 15.* So here, the Spouse in her returne to Christ, is said to be also beautifull, being as it were, shod with the preparation of the Gospell, *Ephes. 6. 15.* By the knowledge and obedience of which, she is set in the way of Christ, whereby her feet and goings are beautifull and glorious. Hence Observe,

That the Saints in their returning to, and walking in Christ, are very beautifull and glorious in their goings. It is a glorious thing to walke in Christ, to walke in the Spirit: those that thus walke are said *To make straight paths for their feet, Heb. 12. 13.* Sin is called *our own wayes*, and crooked wayes, that are not good, but to walke in Christ, and in the spirit, is to walke in beautifull paths. When we walke in darknesse and bondage, we walke as it were, without shooes, bare-footed, but when we walke in the knowledge and counsell of God, then we walke, as it were, with shooes, being shod.

fhod with the preparation of the Gofpell. Thus much for the glory of her walkings, her honour is yet further fet forth in that it's faid,

O Princes Daughter!

The Hebrew *Bath-nadeb*, fignifieth *Daughter of the beautifull*, or, *Of the Prince or noble*: then we may read, *O bounteous Princes Daughter*. Princes are named *bountifull*, as being free, liberall, and willing to doe good to others. To be a Sonne of *Belial*, is to be of a wicked difpofition, *Deut. 13. 13*. And to be the Sonne of a Noble, is to be of an ingenuous and noble difpofition, *Ecclef. 10. 17*. Hereby is noted, that the Spoufe is of a Noble race, of a free difpofition, ready to communicate to others of the grace ſhe hath received.

Hence Obferve,

That the Saints are of a noble parentage and difpofition. Theſe are they which are not borne of blood, nor of the will of man, nor of the fleſh, but of God, *John 1. 13*. The Spoufe is called the *Kings Daughter*, *Pfal. 45*. The word which dwelleth in us, is called *the word of the Kingdome*, becauſe it brings a Kingdome with it: and the Saints are called *Children of the Kingdome*: The Kings Daughter is to be borne, not according to the fleſh, but according to the promiſe: like *Iſaac*, which was Heire to *Abraham* in his houſe, whereas *Iſhmael* and his Mother were caſt out of doors. The Apoſtle affirmeth that the Saints are not *Children of the Seruant*, but of the *free woman*: And *John* ſaith, *We are borne of God, and his ſeed remaineth in us*, *1 John 3. 9*. As by ſeed man is borne of carnall conception, ſo by the Spirit he is born of ſpiritual regeneration. And as the Saints are of an honourable birth, ſo they are of a noble ingenuous difpofition, they are free and ready to communicate.

municate. When the restauration of glory is promised to the Church, it is said, that (*Nabal*) the foole, or vile person, should no more be called (*Nadib*) liberall, or bountifull, Isa. 32. 5. That is, the fool or vile person shall no more be called a Prince, or one that is bountifull, but he shall be called such as he appears to be in his Villany. Thus much for the commendations of the feet of the Spouse, with the Epithite given her, *O Princes Daughter*: now followeth the praise of her *Thighs*, in the next words.

The joynts of thy Thighs are like Jewells, the worke of the hands of a cunning workman.

The Originall word here Translated *joynts*, is not found elsewhere in Scripture; it signifieth *turning*, or things that doe compasse about. Some understand it of the Girdle wherewith the Spouse was girded, which they did use to weare in old time, lower by much then we doe, even upon their Thighs, as appears by *Psal. 45. 3*. Or about the loynes, as *Mat. 3. 4*. And the Apostle useth the same phrase, when he saith, *Gird up the loynes of your mind, and be sober*, 1 Pet. 1. 13. And Paul exhorteth to have *Our loins girded about with truth*, Ephes. 6. 14.

But we may rather take the Thighs to be the bones that turne and move in the hollow of the Thighs: these may be taken for the whole Spouse, and all her parts, every part having in it comelinesse, beauty, glory and strength: noting the upright, goodly, and glorious stature, and gesture of the Spouse, who walketh in a due and comely posture. These her Thighs,

Are like Jewells.

Jewells are very fine and costly: if we refer it to the Girdle.

Girdle, it shews the finenesse and sumptuousnesse of it, but if to the Thighs, then it notes they were neat, and comely. It's added.

The worke of the hands of a cunning work-man.

The Hebrew *Aman* signifies fidelity and skillfullnesse in his workmanship: So we may read it, *The worke of the hands of a cunning Artificer, or, faithfull Craftsman*: this is added, to note the excellency of the work or frame of the Spouse, even like unto Jewells that have most cunning and curious workmanship bestowed upon them: such is the glory, comeliness, and beauty of the Spouse, and of her particular members. Hence Observe,

That the frame and proportion of the Spouse, with all her particular members is very beautifull and glorious. It's like the curious workmanship of some cunning Artificer in Jewells and precious stones, curiously cut and wrought out. The Churches proportion, gesture, stature, walkings, and conversations, is the divine and gracious workmanship of God, *The worke of his hands*, Isa. 60. 21. So that God himselfe is the chiefe Artificer, to frame this heavenly work upon the soul. As Bezalel, and Aholiab, were filled with the Spirit of God, *in wisdom, understanding, knowledge, and Workmanship, to find out curious works, to worke in gold and silver, and the art to set stones, for the making of the Tabernacle, and the Mercy-seat, and Aarons Garments.* So the Lord by his glorious Spirit, doth make his Spouse a more beautifull frame then Aaron was, by that divine work of Spirit, life and glory, that he frames and sets up in the soules of his.

It followeth.

V. E. R. S.

V E R S. 2.

Thy Navell is like a round Goblet which wanteth not liquor: Thy Belly is like an heap of Wheat, set about with Lillies.

THe Spouse being before commended for her walking in the Gospell, and in the truth of Jesus: she is now further praised for her propagating the glorious truth to others, and therefore she is here compared to a woman conceiving and nourishing her Children. *The Spouse*, or Spouse of Christ is first commended by being likened to a woman with child, travelling with, and bringing forth Children. And secondly, nursing them with the Breasts of her consolation, as 'tis said, *Isa. 66. 11.* First it's said,

Thy Navell is like a round Goblet, &c.

The Navell is that by which the Child is nourished in the womb, and this is set forth by the forme of a round Goblet, or, *cup of remembrance*, that is, very comely and beautifull to the shew, as we see Globe Glasses, or standing cups are, that be made after that fashion. It's added,

Which wanteth not liquor.

This shews the cup to be plentifull, that is, full to the top, and overflowing, as *David* speaks, *Psal. 23. 5.* Or, we may read the words thus, *Let not the liquor faile*, as though in earnest affection of desire, there were a wishing for a constant and full supply of grace, to wit, that the womb of the Spouse compared to a round cup, might never dry or be consumed, but rather that it might be like the Widows pitcher of Oile mentioned, *1 Kings 4. 2.*

The

The word translated *liquor*, signifies *mixture*, that is, *liquor mixed*, and so made fit for nourishment; for in the hot easterne Countrey, they used to mixe their wine, sometimes with water, and sometimes with milke, to allay the heat thereof: so wisdom is said to *wing* her wine, *Prov. 9. 2.* And in *Chap. 5. 1.* Christ dranke his wine with his milke. And there is mention made of *speed wine*, *Chap. 8. 2.* that is, mingled with spice to make it the more refreshing & comfortable. The Navel therefore not wanting mixture, denotes the abundance of supply of spirituall nourishment in his Spouse, for the cherishing of her young ones: she is not destitute of food, &c.

Hence Observe.

That the Spouse is supplied with abundance of divine grace, to nourish and cherish her owne Children.

The Lord by his Spirit and graces, doth furnish the Spouse to feed and refresh her owne Members. She hath wherewithall to nourish them, as it were in the wombe, and also strength to bring them forth. Hence it is, that the Apostle in preaching the Gospel is likened to a Father that begetteth, as in *1 Cor. 4. 15.* For though you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, (saith he) yet have yee not many Fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel. And sometime he is likened to a Mother, where he saith, *My little Children of whom I travell in birth, untill Christ be formed in you, Gal. 4. 19.* As if the Apostle had said, ye are my children, whom with much paine and travel, I formerly brought forth to Christ, but you have corrupted your selves againe, and fallen from your former profession; and therefore now I travell with you again, till Christ be againe formed in you, and you receive the right shape

יין
Mixtio,
commixtio,
complexio,
Tempera-
mentum:
vinum aqua
mixtum ita
ut duae sint
partes
aqua una
vini tantum
verbum
יין
Mistere,
temperare.

shape of Christians. And againe, sometimes the Apostle is compared to a Nurse that cherisheth her Children, when he saith, *Wee were gentle among you, even as a Nurse cherisheth her Children*, 1 *Thes.* 2. 7. that is, wee were tenderly affected, as a Nurse that beareth with a froward Child, and patiently taketh all paines with it, as if she were the mother. By all this, wee see that the Lord makes his Spouse as a Mother, or a tender Nurse, unto whom he communicath all good things, for the nourishment and refreshings of the Saints. It followeth,

Thy belly is like an heap of wheate, set about with Lilies.

The fruitfullnesse of the Spouse is resembled by an heap of wheate, and her pleasant sweetnesse is resembled by the Lilies. A farther supply & growth in grace is here noted, by likning the belly of the Spouse to a *heap of wheat*: for, in the harvest, they gathered their Corne together into heapes, *Ruth.* 3. 7. *Mich.* 4. 12. 13. now her belly likened to such a heape of wheate, denotes the spirituall harvest being come, she was ready to bring forth abundance of fruit, having great store of good issue, like a wheat heap; her belly is farther praised, in that its said, it was

Set about with Lilies.

In *Judea*, their corne floores were in open fields, and therefore were hedged about for defence: so the belly of the Spouse being big and ready to bring forth fruit, is beset with sweet and comfortable Lilies, for the encrease of her comfort and joy, : so that the Spouse is, as it were invironed about with grace and protection.

Hence

Hence note.

That the Spouſe bath not only the juice of grace abundantly to nourish her Children; but is becompaſſed with ſweet mercies and comforts.

It is ſaid that the Harlots way is *hedged with thornes*, *Hof. 2. 5.* but the Spouſe is beſet with ſweet Lilies: God doth comfort and proteſt his Spouſe with love, ſweetneſſe and mercy.

It followeth.

VER S. 3.

Thy two Breasts are like two young Roes that are twins.

THIS is a farther commendations of the Spouſe, her breasts are ſet forth to be freſh and luſty, whoſe milke is not conſumed with age or yeares: for they are ſaid to be like the twins of a *Roe-buck*; that is, they are equals even, one of them is not greater then the other. Equallitie in womens Breasts make, much for the beautie of them. Theſe Breasts of the Spouſe, are ſuch as miniſter ſweet conſolations and reſreſhings to ſuch as are Babes in Chriſt, who ſuck the ſincere milke of the word, as it is in *1 Pet. 2. 2.* So the Children of the Church are ſaid, *To ſuck and be ſatiſfied with the breasts of her conſolations, and that they may milke out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glorie, Iſa. 66. 11.* See the words of this verſe alſo expounded before, in Chap. 4. 5. where the words, and alſo the ſenſe are the ſame, as here in this reſemblance; wherefore I ſhall paſſe to that which follows.

ſſſſ

VERS

V E R S. 4.

Thy neck is as a Tower of Ivory, thine eyes like the fish-pools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bath-rabbim: thy nose is as the Tower of Lebanon, which looketh toward Damascus.

IN this verse there is commended three several parts of the Spouse, viz. *her necke, her eyes, her nose.*

Thy neck is as a Tower of Ivory.

This comparison doth not much differ from that former, where he saith, *Thy neck is as the Tower of David, built for an armorie*: saying that there he respecteth strength and force, making mention of the sheilds of mighty men: but here by saying it was of *Ivory*, he meaneth, that it was white and pure, as being made of pure matter, and of a cleare colour, the *Ivory* being of a cleareare white. The neck being compared to a Tower is meant streight and upright: and as it was commended before for strength; so here for beaurie. So t hen wee may understand by this comparison of the *Shulamite*, her neck being likened to a Tower of *Ivory*, the power and glorie of the Church, in respect of the clearenesse and puritie of her doctrine, and upright judgements, whereby her Children are guided and governed, with sweetnesse, peace and liberty.

Hence Note.

That the Saints are glorious, in respect of those divine discoveries of truth, that Christ doth manifest unto them.

Christ tels the *Jewes*, *That if they would continue in his word, they should be his Disciples indeeds, and they should know the truth, and the truth should make them free,* Job. 8. 31, 32. The knowledge of the truth is so excellent and glorious, that it frees the Saints from the
servi-

servitude of men, *1 Cor.* 7. 23. from the service of sin, *Rom.* 6. 6. And therefore its promised that the Church should be loosed from the bands of her necke, *Isa.* 52. 2. The people of *Israel* in the time of their captivity, were such prisoners and captives, as were wont to be fastened one to another, as beasts in a yoake, *Lam.* 1. 14. So the Saints are yoaked and chained, untill the spirit of truth come to set them free : and when freedome is wrought, it is very glorious. It followeth.

Thine eyes like the fish-pools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bathrabbim.

The eyes of the Spouse were commended before in that they were like to Doves eyes, in chap. 4. 1 so here by fish-pooles is meant water of life : Now Christ doth not only note out hereby the pleasantnes of the eyes of the Spouse, as in respect of the colour and beautie, but also commendeth them for the necessary use of them, even as fish-pooles, or pleasant waters were in those hot and drie Countries ; and pools have their name of blessing, *Judg.* 1. 15. because they were filled with raine, the blessing of God, *Ezek.* 34. 26. and therefore these Pooles are said to be in *Heshbon*.

Heshbon was a Citie beyond *Jordan*, in the County of *Sihon* King of *Amorites*, where *Sihon* himselfe reigned, as appeareth, *Josh.* 9. 10. Also *Josh.* 13. 10. 21. It was also scituate in a goodly fertile Country, which the *Rubenites* possessed, *Numb.* 32. 34. 37. *Heshbon* by interpretation signifieth an arteficiall devise, or computation : so that wee may understand them of pooles artificially made. It is added.

By the gate of Bath-rabbim.

The Hebrew *Bath*, is as much as to say the *Daughter*, and *Rabbim* is of *many*: that is as much as to say *the daughter of many*, this seemeth to be meant of the multitude, that should repaire to the Spouse, even as great numbers came to those *fish-pooles*: Here he alludes to the custome used in those dayes both of the Judges and people, who did sit in the gates, *Ruth*, 4. 1. 2 *Sam.* 19. 8. *Lam.* 5. 14. wherefore these fish-pools may be thought to be neere some gate of a Citie, where many people assembled. Thus the Spouse is commended for her cleare discerning of the truths of God.

Hence Observe.

That the spouse is glorious in her spiritual sight and discernence of the truths of Christ. She hath light in her selfe, and walks in the light: she is also able to see into her owne wayes, and the wayes of others. Christ is said to be given for a light to the Gentiles, Isa. 42. 6. And so is the Spouse also, in that its said, The Gentiles shall come to her light, and Kings to the brightnesse of they rising, Isa. 60. 3. Thus the Spouse is not only cleare and pure in her owne judgement and knowledge, like the pooles of Heshbon, but her light and glorie shines forth to others, even, as at the Gates of Bath-rabbim, to wit, at the greatest concourse of people. It followeth.

Thy nose is like the Tower of Lebanon, which looketh toward Damascus.

● The nose is a principall ornament of the face the instrument of smelling and drawing breath: sometimes

times it is put for the whole face. Now the beautie of her nose is set forth by comparing it to the *Tower of Lebanon*.

The *Tower of Lebanon* was *Solomons house*, he called it, *the Forrest of Lebanon*, 1 *Kings* 7. 2. for the great abundance of Cedar tree, whereof it was made, so that it was nothing but comelinesse, beauty, and delight : so then as the nose is a gace unto the countenance of a woman, so is the Spouse comely in the sight of Christ her husband, and he hath great pleasure in her beautie : but its added.

Looking toward Damascus.

He meaneth not as some have fantastically imagin'd that from *Solomons Tower*, men might behold the Citie of *Damascus* in *Syria*, but that *Lebanon it selfe*, and therefore the house and Tower builded there, lay as it were over against *Damascus*. Now *Damascus* was the chiefe Citie in *Syria*, *Isa.* 7. 8. called in Hebrew *Dammeseke*, as 2 *Kings* 16. 10. in Greeke its called *Damascus*, *Acts* 9. 20. It was a goodly Citie of joy and praise, *Jer.* 49. 24. The Inhabitants were commonly enemies to *Israel*, with whom they made warre many times, as appeares, 1 *Kings* 11. 24, 25. *Isa.* 7. 5. 8.

By the nose then we may in the first place understand the courage and strength of the Spouse, and that she was carefull to defend her selfe and Members, against her enemies. As in times of danger, they set on Towers and high places watchmen, to spie out any approaching danger, as in *Isa.* 21. 6. 9. And *Ezek.* 33. 2. 6. So in that the nose of the Spouse is likened to the *Tower of Lebanon*, which was high and lofty : as the

the pride of the wicked is set forth by the haughtinesse of his Nose, *Psal. 10. 4.* signifying his lofty, stout, and proud carriage; and on the contrary, when the threatening to *Jerusalem*, he saith, he would take away her nose and her eares, &c. *Ezek. 23. 24.* So here in that the Spouse is likened in her nose to the Tower of *Labanon*, that's high and tall, looking toward *Damascus*, that were full of enemies, it shews her courage and care to defend herselfe against her adversaries.

Hence note the valour, strength, and courage of the Saints, they doe as it were outface their enemies; they looke upon the face of *Damascus*: but having spoken oftentimes of this thing, I shall passe it here. But,

Secondly, the Nose is the instrument of smelling and discerning: So that she is declared to be able to discern and examine doctrine, as the Nose by sent and smelling discerneth betweene wholesome Ointments, and contagious fents and smells.

Hence Observe,
That the Saints have a spirituall discerning of what is truth. They have not onely a spirituall sight and knowledge of truth, but they are able to search into the bottom of it; they can *Tast words by the eare*, as *Job* speaks. Christs Sheep know his voyce from the voyce of strangers, so that the Spouse here is very comely and seemly in discerning the doctrine of the Gospel by triall and examination, as the Nose doth Ointments by the smell. Thus the Noble *Bereans* tried *Pauls* Doctrine, *Acts 17. 11, 12.* And thus the Apostle exhorteth, *to prove all things*, *1 Thess. 5. 21.* It followeth,

V E R S. 5.

Thine head upon thee is like Carmel, and the haire of thine head like Purple, the King is held in the Galleries.

First, here's the commendations of the head: Some read it, *Thy head upon thee*: Others, *In thine head*: we may take it either for the head it selfe (which is Christ, *Ephes. 1. 22.*) or it may be taken for the Ornament upon the head, namely those graces wherewith Christ hath adorned his Spouse. Now the commendation of her head is, that it's said to be,

As Carmell.

The word *Carmell* is commonly taken for a place full of pastures, set also with Trees, whereof it's likely that this place had it's name: *Carmell* was the name of the Mountaine where *Elias* killed *Baals* Priests, and praid for raine, *1 Kings 18. 19, 20.* It seemed to be a very fruitfull place, *Nahum 1. 4.* For a fruitfull place opposed to a barren Wildernesse, is called *Carmell*. *Isa. 32. 15.* And *Chap. 29. 17.* Now the head of the Spouse being thus likened to *Carmell*, a very fruitfull place, denotes the wisdom and knowledge of the Spouse. Hence Observe,

That the Saints are glorious in the wisdom and knowledge of God. VVhither we take it for the Ornaments of the head, or for the head it selfe, it's all one (for Christ is both the head and the Ornaments also) it shews how glorious the Spouse is in wisdom and understanding, she is full of gravity, carrying her selfe wisely in all her actions: her mind being filled with the counsell and knowledge of God. Thus the Lord foretelling the glory of the Spouse, saith, *The glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmell*
and

and Sharon, &c. Isa. 35. 2. The meaning is, that where-
as the Church in her former dark and low condition,
was like a wast wilderness, but when the Lord should
shine upon her with more light and glory, she should
become a most plentiful and beautifull place, even as
Carmell and Sharon. The Hebrew *Carmell* is sometimes
taken for *Crimson*, or Scarlet-colour, 2 Chron. 3. 14.
such colours were worne of Princes and great persons,
meaning thereby, that her head was adorned with that
which was costly and full of majesty, as that colour is;
but the other Interpretation seems to be the most pro-
per. It followeth,

And the haire of thy head like Purple.

The haire, or, the bush of thine head. The word *Dallath*
(which is onely used in this place) signifies *slender-
nesse* or *tenuity*, such haire as is small and slender:
wherefore some take it for the haire of the head, for
the smallnesse of them, and some for the Laces that
binde up the haire. Now in that it's said, her haire
is as purple, it's meant, that it is costly and deare, as
which did not belong to any but mighty men and Ma-
gistrates. See *Luke* 16. 19. Also *Dan* 5. 16. which no
doubt also they did weare as an attire of great comeli-
nesse and beauty. By the *haire* some understand the
multitude of believers, but rather we may understand
it of cogitations and purposes of the heart; and then
Note.

*That the Saints are glorious in the thoughts and purposes
of their hearts.* Their thoughts are ordered by the
Lord, and their minds are filled with understanding.
But I shall passe this, having spoken more largely of it
in Chap. 4. 1. where the Spouses *haire* was likened to
a flock

a flock of Goats, that was smooth and faire: So here, it's likened to purple, deare and costly, it being the comely and beautifull attire of great ones. Purple differs not much (as some think) from Scarlet, in which respect they reconcile the Evangelists. Matthew affirming, Chap. 27. 28. that they put upon Christ a Scarlet Robe. And John 19. 2. As also Mark 15. 17. calling it a purple, or purple Garment. But I passe this. It followeth,

The King is held in the Galleries.

The beauty of the Spouse being thus described in all her parts, is now amplified by two effects: the first is, that it worketh in the King a strong desire, that he would alwayes be bound unto the walking places with his love, *The King is held in the Galleries.* The second effect is that which causeth him to utter with a great admiration at her beauty and sweetnesse, which is declared by the matter, in all those parts that have been described, all which is beautified with an exclamation, *How faire*, &c. as it followeth in the next verse. But first of the Kings desire to be bound unto the walking places of his Spouse.

The King is held in the Galleries.

By the King here is meant Solomon, and under him Christ. The word *Rchatim*, translated Galleries, is used for Gutters wherein waters run, for the flock to drinke, as in Genes. 30. 38. & Exod. 2. 16. but here it seemeth to be meant of such Galleries as run along the house side, and are places to walke in. Some render it thus, *A King would be tied in his Galleries*: as if he should say, there is no King in the world so glorious

or majestically, that if he should behold thy beauty and glory, it would cause him to stand amazed thereat; he would no more looke upon his owne glory, but upon thine, so far doth thine excell all the glory of the world; so that he that beholds it would be, as it were, with a continuall desire to look upon thee, so highly would he esteem of thy exceeding glory, before his owne, or any earthly glory whatsoever: So then, there is not the mightiest Prince in the world, but if he did see the beauty of the Spouse, would desire to be tied or bound to any part or piece of it: yea, to take up his continuall abode there, that he might be satisfied with the sight thereof, and continually to looke upon the inward and spirituall beauty of the Church. See this performed by *David*, *Psal. 27. 4.* Also *Psal. 84.* throughout.

Or, rather we may take it thus: *The King*, to wit, *Christ* himselfe, is held, or, tied in his Galleries: to wit, in his Spouse, in his Saints: So that he hath a fixed habitation in the house of his Church, where he is, as it were, bound by the bands of amity and love: the Spouse being so excellent in all parts, so glorious, so beautifull, that he cannot but Covet her beauty, as it's said in *Psal. 45. 12.*

Hence Observe,

That Christ is affected to be neer his Spouse, and to behold her beauty and comelinesse. The Galleries and large rooms of Kings were hanged with goodly Hangings of Purple, or of some rich stuffe: unto such glorious rooms is the Spouse likened, being glorious in all parts, whereby she draweth the affections of her beloved unto her: Hence it is, that it's said, *The Lord delighted in thee, and thy Land shall be married, Isa. 62. 4.*

And

And the glory of the Church is ſet forth thus, *My ſervant David ſhall be their Prince for ever, and I will ſet my Sanctuary in the miſt of them for evermore, and the name of the City from that day ſhall be, the Lord is here,* Ezek. 37. 25, 26. So that the preſence of God, manifeſting of light, life, and glory, ſhould be the excellency of the heavenly City, the new Jeruſalem that comes downe from heaven. And it's ſaid in Zeph. 3. 17. *The Lord thy God in the miſt of thee, &c.* And ſo it's ſaid of the new Jeruſalem in Rev. 22. 3. 5. *The Throne of God, and of the Lamb, ſhall be in it, and his ſervants ſhall ſerve him, and they ſhall reigne for ever.* So that Chriſt is tied by bands of love to be preſent with his Church, manifeſting of divine preſence to her, and beholding in her his owne beauty and glory. So much for the firſt effect of the Churches beauty and comelineſſe in all parts. The ſecond followeth, where Chriſt doth, as it were, breake forth into admiration and great wonderment at her beauty in the whole, or in all laid together, ſaying,

V E R S. 6.

How faire and how pleaſant art thou O love, for delights.

THIS admiration of the Spouſes beauty and pleaſantneſſe in all parts, ſheweth the ground of the former ſpeech, why the King is held in his Galleries, forasmuch as he was ſo exceedingly raviſhed and overcome with the beauty and glory of his Spouſe. This admiration of the Spouſes glory is brought upon all thoſe former particulars, and therefore the words ſtand thus, as touching the ſence of them, O

T t t t 2

Love,

Love, or, O my love, how faire art thou, and how pleasant art thou in every respect, in all parts, or rather in all those heaped up together in one? For as you see, he hath gone by particulars from the foot to the head. First, he commendeth her goings, as with shooes: then he likeneth the joynts of her Thighs to Jewells, the work of the hands of a cunning workman. After this he mentioneth the Navell, which he compares to a round cup that wanteth not liquour. And her belly to an heap of wheat compassed about with Lillies. Her two Breasts are as two young Roes that are Twins. And so he ascendeth, and saith, her Neck is as a Tower of Ivory: her eyes like the fish-pools of Heshbon, by the gate of Bath-rabbim. Her Nose as the Tower of Lebanon that looketh toward Damascus: her Head like Scarlet, and her haire like the Purple, whereby the King is held in his Galleries. In summe, her beauty is wonderfull in all parts, she is comely throughout. True beauty consists in the symetrie and consent of all parts: if there be a comely and pleasant face and not a comely body: or if there be a comely body, but not so well favoured a face: or if the face and body be both comely, and yet some defect in one part or other, there is not a compleit beauty. But there is no such kind of deformity in the Spouse, for she is beautifull in every part, she is wholly delectable and full of glory. Hence it is that Christu- seth such a vehement exclamation, saying,

How faire art thou.

As before in the first verse, when he began to commend his Spouse in her severall parts, he used a vehement exclamation, thereby to set out his great love
and

and liking of them, and the excellency thereof: so having finished that particular praise, and beginning here generally to commend her, he useth the like, saying, *How faire, &c.* That is, thou art so beautifull and faire, both in every part of thee, and in the whole, that I know not what words to use, to expresse the same, neither indeed can it be sufficiently declared. And it's added.

And how pleasant art thou?

The word translated *pleasant*, doth signifie *sweet, amiable, sweet, comely, and gracious*: he meaneth nothing else but that she was wholly and altogether delightful.

O my love.

The Spouse is Christs love, the only object of his delight: the substantive is here put for the adjective, to note both the exceeding great love of Christ towards her, as also all those amiable, gracious parts in her, to move love and affection in others to her. The word here is not the same that is used in Chap. 1. 9. 15. And Chap. 2. 2. And 4. 1. which did signifie loving societie and friendship: but this word signifies a sweet inward affection, which is very strong and vehement: this notes unto us, Christs great exceeding affections to his Spouse: besides the sweet compellation, the delightfulnesse of the Spouse is enlarged, by saying.

How pleasant art thou for delights?

For delight, or, in pleasures, or in these pleasures: viz. reckoned up before in her particular commendation.

8. The LXX. turne it frequently by ἀγαπάω diligo, amo: and by φιλέω amo: and by χαίρω gaudeo.

אָמָן
Amānus,
jucundus, a-
mabilis, pul-
cher, deco-
rus, gratus
fuit.

אָהַב
Amavit, di-
lexit. ver-
bum Ahab.
diligendi es-
se ardens &
vehemens,
& significa-
re aliquid
tenerum &
affectione
plenum, ut
sit is dili-
gens iusti-
am, qui in
ea sibi pla-
cet & ac-
quiescit eam
exquirat &
persequitur.
Rivet: in
Psal. 45.

on : meaning hereby, that she was full of all manner of delight and pleasure: she was wholly, and every part and piece of her, together with all her ornaments and attires, or whatsoever did generally or particularly belong unto her, was glorious, excellent, sweet, pleasant, beautifull, comely, delightfull, &c. Now in that Christ doth speake of this beautie in a way of wonderment, from the heaping up of all those particulars together in one.

Hence Observe.

First, *That the beautie of the Saints is exceeding great and wonderfull.*

For, where there be many goodly things, and every one by its selfe to be wondred at for beautie, how much may they be wondred at when they come altogether, to be heaped up in one? The Lord doth bestow many goodly things upon his Spouse, he doth deck her with many rich ornaments, every one of which is to be wondred at for excellency, then how much more when they come altogether? The glorie of the Spouse is the more excellent, if wee consider the person that doth thus admire her beautie: and that is Christ himselfe, who cannot admire any low thing: lay all the glorie of Kings before him, and it is, but drosse, he cannot wonder thereat: for what is that to his owne glorie and excellency, with which the Saints are cloathed? what is the glorie and excellencie of the Sunne, the Moone and Starres unto him? doth he wonder at them? Surely he wondereth at the glory and beautie of his Spouse, how excellent then is her beautie and glorie: wee account those earthly things very rare and excellent, that Princes upon earth doe wonder at; how much more rare and excellent

excellent must these things be, that Christ the King of Kings doth wonder at?

Secondly Observe.

That Christ doth not only wonder at, but exceedingly affect and delight in the beautie and glorie of his Saints. He doth not only call her faire and pleasant; but he also calls her his love, and not only his love, but his love in pleasures, or in delights, or in the things which we esteeme as dainties. Surely, this doth augment the matter, this is a very forcible speech to declare his exceeding affection towards her. We know men may love things, and take delight in them, but there be degrees in their love: they may love things very well, yet that is the highest, when they take their chiefe pleasure and delight in that which they love. So Christ sheweth here, that he taketh delight and pleasure in the beautie of his Spouse, she is exceeding precious and amiable in his sight. And as she is matter of delight and pleasure to Christ, so she is to all that behold her beautie; so that all that love her may rejoyce with her, and delight themselves in the brightnesse of her glorie, as *Isa. 66. 10. 11.* It followeth.

Verf. 7. *Thus thy stature is like a palm-tree, and thy breasts to clusters of grapes.*

Christ having commended the beautie of his Spouse by particular Members, & as it were by piece-meale, declaring her to be faire, saying, *How faire!* joyned with pleasure, *How pleasant art thou!* yea so pleasant for all delicacies and delights. Now he comes to set her forth in generall, and that by the comely stature of her whole body; declaring it to be strong,
straight.

streight, and durable, like the palme-tree: 1. 11. in 110. 1025

Thy stature or height, is like a palme-tree, (or, a date-tree) called in Hebrew *Thamar*, being very tall and upright in stature. The just mans state is likened to this tree, *Psal. 9. 13.* And therefore there were set up in the Temple, figures of the palme-trees, *1 Kings 6. 29.* which did prefigure spirituall graces of those of the spirituall Temple under the Gospel, as appears in *Ezek. 41. 18, 19.* Now the glorie and excellencie of the Spouse is fitly resembled and set forth by the Palme-tree, and that in these particulars.

First, It is very fruitful, bringing forth dates sweet and delicious, like unto which are those fruits of the spirit, as love, joy, and peace, &c. 1. 11. in 110. 1025

Secondly, Its like unto the Children of *Israel* under the task-masters of *Egypt*, the more burdens are laid upon it, the better it groweth: for its reported of the Palme-tree, that it will not bow down, but grow streight upright, though never so heaueie burdens be laid upon it: Such is the spirituall stature, and growth of the Spouse, that notwithstanding all her affliction, oppression, and tribulation, she still grows upward, streight and upright; from glorie to glorie, untill she attaine the measure of the stature of the fulnesse of *Christ*, as the Apostle saith, *Ephes. 4. 13.* The Kingdome of *Israel*s prosperous condition is likened to a Tree, whose stature was exalted among the thick branches, *Ezek. 19. 11.* The happinesse and prosperitie of the Saints is, to grow upward and streight upright under all pressures whatsoever.

Thirdly, It's a signe used for victorie, they which stood before the Throne and the Lamb, representing the glorie and reigne of the Church, Were clothed

with

with long white robes, and had palmes in their hands, Rev. 7. 9. So is the Spouse made to prevaile over flesh, and the powers of darknesse.

Fourthly, Its alwayes greene; therefore *David saith, The just man shall flourish as the Palme-tree, Psal. 92. 12.* They are alwayes fresh and flourishing, their fruit uever withers nor decayes: so wee see why the stature of the Spouse is set forth by the palme-tree: to shew, that she is fresh and flourishing, and standeth upright: so that she was of most strong and streight body. And as streightnesse of the body giveth grace to women, so the Spouse is gracefull and excellent in respect of her flourishing condition. Now it followeth.

And thy breasts to clusters of grapes

As her stature is likened to the palm-tree: so her breasts to clusters; which must be meant of wine: so that her breasts were not only small and equall, as verse the third, and well fashioned, as in *Ezek. 16. 7.* but full of milke, and divine nourishment to satisfie her Children withall, which they that love her may *suck and be satisfied, Isa. 66. 7.* Her breasts are like to clusters of wine, a sweet and wholesome fruit, but much more sweet and refreshing is the sweet wine of heavenly consolation, and the sincere milke of the word, by which the faithfull are nourished. The Spouse then having plentiful supplies of divine nourishment, and heavenly sweetnesse, to supply all her Members withall, for she hath most firme and plentiful breasts, as those clusters of grapes, that are thick set with grapes, indeed are. The Spouses condition is not, as the complaint was made, there was *no cluster*

to eat, Mich. 7. 1. but as when new wine was found in the cluster, and he said, destroy it not for a blessing is in it, Isa. 65. 8. Wee have spoken of this before, what the breasts are, and what that sincere milke is, by which the faithfull are nourished, and therefore I shall not speake of this any more in this place.

VERS. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13.

I said, I will goe up to the palme-tree; I will take hold of the boughs thereof: now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the Vine, and the smell of thy nose like apples. And the roose of thy mouth like the best wine, for my beloved, that goeth downe sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speake.

I am my beloveds, and his desire is towards me.

Come my beloved, let us goe forth into the field, &c.

WEE have heard of the great praise and commendation which Christ giveth to his Spouse, by comforting her, declaring her beauty and comelienesse. Now he comes to make a sweet promise unto his Spouse, of what great things he will doe for her: and also the sweet effects, that she should thereby become very sweet and precious. This is contained in verse 8. 9. Afterwards we have the Spouse returning answer, expressing her large affections towards Christ, that seeing his kindenesse hath been so great towards her, she doth even as it were dedicate or consecrate her selfe to him againe, and this is contained in the residue of the Chapter. But let us come to the words themselves.

I said, I will goe up to the Palme-tree, I will take hold of the boughs thereof.

In these words contained in the 8, and 9. verses : Observe Christs new promise made to his Spouse, which is set downe by the parts, and the effects. The parts of the promise are two.

First, *He will climbe the palma-tree.*

Secondly, *that he will take hold of the boughes thereof:* both which sheweth, that Christ will joyne himselfe nigh unto his Spouse, and cause her to beare abundance of fruit.

The effects of this promise follow.

First, *It makes the breasts of the Spouse to be as the clusters of the Vine.*

Secondly, *Her nose shall smell like apples.*

Thirdly, *The roose of her mouth like the best wine, &c.* which wine is described.

First, *By the adjunct and the effect: it is of an excellent smell, it goeth downe sweetly, and makes those that are asleepe to speake.*

I said I will goe up to the palme-tree, and take hold of the boughes, &c.

These words, as you heard before, containe a promise of Christ to his Spouse, wherein he doth declare what he will doe for her, what excellent things he will performe and bring to passe for her.

First, The actions of Christ are declared, in these words, *I will goe up to the palme-tree, I will take hold of her boughes.*

I said, that is, I doe vehemently affirme, the speech containes, as it were, a grave sentence: I give thee my
U u u u 2 promise

promise, and looke what I promise thee, I will performe, &c.

I will goe up into the palm-tree: that is, I will draw nigh unto thee, I will afford thee my presence. It's added.

I will take hold of the boughes thereof: he meaneth by this speech, that he would purge it, that so he might not only perceive, but receive fruit of her, even as the palme-trees the tender branches, are specially pruned and trimmed, because they should yeild blossomes, and buds for fruit. The Hebrew *Sansinim*, here translated *boughs* or *branches*, properly signifies the highest branches in the Tree, and is not used in any place of Scripture but in this, because the palme-tree (as writers say) hath not boughes on the sides like other Trees, but doth only at the top send forth such long bowes, and there also the fruit it selfe groweth. In summe, this is Christs meaning, that he will goe up into the palm-tree, that is joyn himself to his Spouse, (who before was resembled to the same) and will take hold of her boughes: to the end he may prune and dresse her, that she may bring forth abundance of fruit, such as Christ himselfe may accept of.

Hence Observe.

First, *That the Saints stand in need of pruning and topping, and to have their superfluous branches taken off, to make them fruitfull.* Hence it is, that Christ saith here, *I will get up into the Palme-tree, and take hold of her branches*: which doth shew he had the possession of his Spouse, his love, and care was over her, to prune and dresse her; to purge her, that shee might bring forth more fruit; as it is,

is said of the Fathers *punging of the Vine, that it might bring forth more fruit, John 15. 1, 2.*

Secondly Observe,

That it is onely Christs worke to purge his Saints. Christ doth elsewhere compare himselfe to the Vine, but here to a Husbandman to prune and lop off the superfluous branches of his Spouse: this is the proper worke of Christ, and none can doe it besides him, for he saith, *Without me you can doe nothing, John 15. 5.* None is able to act, or any way purifie himselfe, but by the spirit, and life of Christ within him. Thus much for Christs performance: the effects follow.

Now also thy breasts shall be as the Clusters of the Vine and the smell of thy Nose like Apples.

The Breasts of the Spouse were before compared to Clusters, but now to the *Clusters of the Vine.* This denotes a greater measure of the sweet juyce of the Spirit to be powred out upon her, and doth in a more plenteous manner draw forth her breasts, and minister food and divine nourishment unto her Children.

Hence Note,

That Christ doth fill the Spouse with the sweet juyce of his spirit, whereby she is able to nourish her Children. The Spouse doth alwayes minister food to her members: but here her breasts are not onely likened to *Clusters*, but to clusters of the *Vine*, intimating that as Christ doth more abundantly administer unto her: so she doth more plentifully administer unto others. The breasts of the Spouse are then alwayes like clusters of the *Vine*, there is in them a right wholesome and sweet juyce, but when the Lord powreth forth upon her the greatest measure of his spirit, then doth she in
a most

a most plenteous manner draw forth her Breasts, and minister food unto her Children. Now followeth the second effect, where he saith,

And the smell of thy Nose like Apples.

The Nose of the Spouse was before commended for the comely forme thereof, in verse 4. which denoted her courage and behaviour: now here it's commended for the sweet breath that cometh from it; it's said to be like the smell of Apples, that is, like sweet and pleasant smells that come from Apples.

Hence Observe,

That Christ's divine presence with us, is so excellent, it maketh us fragrant to himselfe, sweet and comfortable unto others. The sweet odour of the Spouse, is her fame spread abroad, and is comfortable to those that smell the sent thereof. The Lord doth manifest the savour of his knowledge by his people in every place, 2 Cor. 2. 14. This savour is like the savour of Apples, which refresh those that languish, and are sick of the love of Christ. The Spouse can breath nothing but sweetnesse, all that approach neer her, shall smell the savour of her sweet breath. The breath of Antichrist is loathsome to all that can smell, but the breath of Christ through the Saints, is to the savour of their Nose, as the savour of Apples. Therefore the sum of all is thus much, as if Christ had spoke thus much to his Spouse, I will not onely be present with thee, satisfying my selfe, as it were in thy breasts and beauty, and delighting in thy love continually, but I will also make thee strong, fresh, lively, yea, sweet and pleasant to all such as shall come unto thee by meanes of such graces as I shall indue thee withall; and to the same

ſame effect, read the words of the next verſe.

VERS. 9.

*And the roſe of thy mouth like the beſt wine, for my beloved
that goeth downe ſweetly, cauſing the lips of thoſe that are
aſleep to ſpeake.*

Here is the laſt effect of Chriſts approaching near
this Sponſe, namely, that it maketh the rooſe of
her mouth like the beſt wine, which wine is amplified by
the effect of it, above other wine, in that firſt it's ſaid
To goe downe ſweetly. Secondly, It cauſeth the lips of
thoſe that are aſleep to ſpeake.

The rooſe of thy mouth is like the beſt wine, &c.

The rooſe, or palate of the mouth is to diſcerne and
taſte withall, as it's ſaid Job 34. 3. The palate taſteth
meat. But in relation to others, it is the inſtrument of
ſpeech, as in Prov 8. 1. My palate ſhall ſpeake truth. So
that by the rooſe of her mouth is here ſignified, that
which proceedeth out of her mouth, to wit, her holy
word and doctrine, which ſhe doth declare and pub-
liſh. This lively word is here likened unto good
wine, viz. both for colour, ſtrength, taſt, and ſweet-
neſſe, for all theſe concur together in good wine, mean-
ing here by good wine, the beſt, moſt excellent, ſweet,
and wholeſome wine, that it ſhall ſmell well, and
be moſt ſweet and mighty in operation; and hence it
is, that this wine is commended for the good uſe
thereof, as it is deſcribed in the next words, by the
property, and by the effect.

For my beloved, that goeth downe ſweetly.

By the beloved uſually in this Song is meant Chriſt,

by going downe *sweetly*, or *straghtly*, or to *righteousnesse* for so we may read the words, *That goeth to my beloved, to righteousness.* That is, *straghtly*, or according to *righteousnesse*; Hereby is signified the nature or quality of pure wine, which sheweth the goodnesse thereof by moving and springing in the cup, whereby it is discerned to be the best wine, and most pleasing to those that drinke it. Like to this is the phrase that Solomon useth in Prov. 23. 31. *Looke not on the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth it selfe aright.* Or, as we may read it, *when it moveth (or walketh) in righteousness.* The nature of the best wine is thus described, whereby men are allured to drinke of it: so here, the wine of the Spouse, to wit, that holy word, and pure doctrine of hers, is declared to be pleasing and right in the eyes of Christ her beloved. The Spouse is *filled with the spirit*, and *not with wine*, as the Apostle speaks: and this is that which is so pleasing unto Christ; it is such a wine that the Spouse sends unto her beloved. The effect of this wine follows:

Causing the lips of those that are asleep to speake.

Another commendation of the wine: it *causeth the lips to speake*, or it *maketh to speake*, or it *giveth utterance* to the lips of those that be asleep. The Hebrew word *Jashan*, translated, *asleep*, signifies both to *sleep*, and to *wax old*: therefore some Translations read it, *Causing the lips of the ancient to speake.* Old folk many times be dull and heavy of speech, but this wine hath force in it, that it will open their mouths, and cause them to utter the language of the Spirit of God. And the word may also be turned to *sleep*, this wine is so

ſtrong that it quickneth up the heavy ſenſes, and doth after a ſort, as it were, reſreſh the mind, even of thoſe that are aſleep. This manner of ſpeech, though, as we reſpect the ſimilitude, it may ſeeme hiperbolicall, or very exceſſive, yea, more then true, yet if we reſpect the ſpirituell meaning, we ſhall find it is truth it ſelfe: for what is Chriſts purpoſe here, but that his Spouſe ſhould be filled with the fullneſſe of God, whereby ſhe ſhould be able to ſpeake of the things of God, in ſuch power and delightfullneſſe of ſpeech, that it ſhall raiſe men up from the dead: not onely from naturall death, but from the ſleep of death and ſin. Hence Obſerve,

That the Saints declaring the Goſpell of Chriſt from the fullneſſe of God on them, doe raiſe men out of the ſleep of death and ſin, and makes them ſpeake with new tongues, the praiſe of the glory of God. The Saints are filled with the Spirit, as with the beſt wine, whereby they declare the excellent things of God (which we may underſtand by the *rooſe of the mouth* which is the principall inſtrument of nature, given us to frame our voyce by. See Chap. 5. 15.) this excellency is pleaſing to Chriſt, it is as wine for the beloved, it is ſuch wine as the Spouſe can commend to her beſt friend, it is ſuch as goeth downe ſtraightly, or in righteouſneſſe: it is ſo pure it allureth all that ſeeth it, to drinke of the ſame. This wine is the *immortall ſeed*, 1 Pet. 1. 23. it is the *power of God to ſalvation*, Rom. 1. 16. By which we are quickned and raiſed up together, and made to ſit together in heavenly places with Chriſt, Ephes. 2. 1. 6. This wine maketh men talkative, Prov. 23. 29. it maketh men utter the myſteries of the Kingdome of God: as the Diſciples, (when ſome thought they were full of

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new

new wine) prophecied and spake with other tongues the great works of God, *as the Spirit gave them utterance* Acts 2. 4. 11. 12. &c. by this those that are a sleep, yea, in a dead sleep of sin, it raiseth and quickneth such, it causes their lips to praise God, which before had no power that way. When sinners are awakened by the internall word of the Gospell, it's said, *Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee life*, Ephes. 5. 14. And so it's prophecied, *Thy dead men shall live, with my dead body shall they arise, awake and sing yee that dwell in the dust*, Isa. 26. 19. And thus the *dead bones* of the house of Israel are said to be raised at the Prophecy, Ezek. 37. And not onely dead men that are asleep, but those that are ancient, having their senses dulled, and are very slow to speak, this wine shall revive the spirits of the aged, or such as are in a state of security (as the Spouse acknowledgeth her selfe in Song 5. 2.) are inabled by this spirituall wine, to speake, yea, *The Tongue of the dumb shall sing, for in the wilderness shall breake forth waters, and streams in the desert*, Isa. 35. 6. when the Saints are filled with the streams of living waters, and made drunk with the spirituall wine of the Kingdome of God, then they shall sing forth the praise of God. Thus far we have had Christs commendations of his Spouse, with his promises unto her. Now followeth the answer of the Spouse, or her returne of love unto Christ, in the residue of the Chapter.

V E R S. 10.

I am my beloveds, and his desire is towards me.

CHRIST having commended his Spouse before, to the end he might comfort her, by letting her know that her blot was wholly taken away, and that her comeliness and beauty was perfect and pleasing in his eyes. And having promised what he would doe for her, in uniting himselfe unto her, and also declared how fruitfull, sweet, and precious she should become thereby. Now the Church answereth, expressing at large her affection and duty towards Christ, that seeing his kindnesse hath been so great towards her, she doth even, as it were, dedicate, vow, and consecrate her selfe, and all that she hath, unto him, hasting in desire; and longing for a neerer communion with him. But to come to her words.

I am my beloveds, and his desire is towards me.

The conjunction of the words may be taken thus, *seeing, or because his affection is towards me.* For in the first clause of the sentence she consecrateth her selfe wholly unto Christ, saying, *I am my beloveds*, and in the latter clause she rendereth a reason, saying, *Because his affection is towards me.* His kindnesse towards me wrought this effect, that she and all hers shall be dedicated unto him. The cause alwayes goeth before the effect.

Here the Spouse then, as full of the wine of the Spirit, and consolation from the Lord, testifieth her assurance in him, and that she doth in the right of affiance and marriage belong unto him, in that she saith, *I am my beloveds.* And the ground of it is, *For his desire is*

towards me. That is, he doth desire me, and in this affection most tenderly love me. It is as if the Spouse had said, there is a mutuall love between us, as I love him, so he loveth me, as I belong to him, so he belongs to me, his love is the ground of mine, and my love to him is the effect of his love. Hence Note,

That the manifestation of Christs love to us, is the cause of our love unto him. His love is as the cause preceding, and our love as the effect following after: Thus the Apostle John testifieth saying, *We love him because he first loved us.* The Spouse declareth the same here, the summe of her speech being thus much in effect, seing my beloved hath set his affections so upon me, & freely loved me when I was lost, and an enemy to him, as in *Rom. 5.* when dead in sin, *Ephes. 2.* when I was altogether abominable, *Rom. 3.* yea, that his affection was towards me so, as that he hath called me into the neereest fellowship with himselve, and doth sweetly imbrace me notwithstanding all my fleshly actings; is there not cause why I should be his? Such abundant love doth cause love againe. As the desire of a woman is towards her husband, and the desire of a man towards his wife: so Christs love and affection is towards his Spouse, her desire is also towards him. If the Spouse first apprehend the love and affection of Christ, this love of Christ (as the Apostle speaketh) will constrain the Spouse to love Christ againe. And now behold how forward and ready the Bride is to draw neer to Christ, and to have the day of the marriage approach. She is not the woman that she was before in the fifth Chapter, where she made excuses, and would not arise to open to Christ, for now she calleth unto him to come to her, and to walk
with

with her, as in the next verse.

V E R S E II.

*Come my beloved, let us goe forth into the field, let us lodge
in the Villages.*

THe Lord had promised in the former Verses, that he would goe up into the Palm-tree, and take hold of her boughs, he would dresse and prune his Church, and she thereupon should become most flourishing, fruitfull, and delectable; unto this here the Spouse offereth her service. The Spouse doth not name the *Palm-tree*, but *Cyprus trees*, and *Vines*, but the matter is all one, seing the Church is resembled by the one as well as by the other. Then thus it is; the Lord promiseth to draw neer his Spouse, and to dresse and trim her, and she offereth her selfe most cheerfully thereunto. He will bestow his rich grace and presence upon her, and she is brought to be on a flame of thirsting and desiring after the same.

Come my beloved.

These are words of exhortation, and provoking, as it were, taken also from the love of the Spouse towards Christ, more effectually to perswade the thing she desireth, because men willingly commit themselves to the company, and easily yeild to the requests of such as they take to be their best friends; hence she useth this kind of exhortation or invitation,
Come my Beloved.

Let us goe forth into the fields.

*Into the fields, or into the Countrey, a place of corne,
Vines,*

Vines, fig-trees, Pomegranate-trees, &c. as *Joel* 11. 12. The Spouse speaketh this after the manner of men, inhabiting Cities, and having their farme-houses abroad in the Country, whither they may walke for recreation, and to see how forward the Spring is, and whither the time of Summer or Harvest doe draw nigh : but all this must be understood spiritually and mystically, as if the Spouse should say, I beseech thee, doe not alone, and by thy selfe walke out into the field, and retire thy selfe : but let us both walke together, and be retired from the trouble and distraction of this world and flesh : and walke into the field of sweet meditation and heavenly delight.

She addeth.

Let us lodge in the Villages.

This part of the verse is diversly read, by reason of the diverse significations of the words used therein : as the word turned *lodge*, signifies also to *remaine* or continue : also the word *Cepharim*, doth not only signify *villages*, but *Cypresse-trees*. So that the word is used in Scripture to signify *villages*, and also the *Cypres*. The Greek turneth it by *villages* : such common villages are distinguished from such Townes or Cities, as are fenced in, 1 *Sam.* 6 18. Now in this that the Spouse doth desire, to goe with Christ and to lodge with him the fields, in and villages, doth note unto us that the Spouse is drawne off from all fleshly delight, and from sheltering her selfe in any outward glorie or strength.

Hence note.

That the soule brought up to live in the light of God, and in neere fellowship of Christ, is taken off from the continuance

ance or trusting in any outward glorie.

The Spouse desires not to goe with Christ into the fenced Cities, and places of worldly delight and pleasure : but into the Villages and fields, and to lodge among the Cypres-trees, that she may rise up early to goe to the Vines : She is now wrapt and overcome with the desire and love of heavenly things, that her minde and affections are carried out of the world, she will now lodge in a continuall meditation and delight of divine things, yea, she will dayly raise up her selfe to behold the fruit, that doth spring from them. The case is altered with the Spouse now, from what it was, when she was asleep in fleshly security, and was loath to be raised up : even when the flesh had so much prevailed upon her, then these things of Christ, these holy breathings out after him seemed to lie buried : but now when the Spirit quickneth, and raiseth her, her heart is drawn off from fleshly glorie and prosperity, and she desireth to lodge continually with Christ in the large field of heavenly delights. Now the Spouse is sweetly imbracing of spirituall and heavenly things, now she can stay among those heavenly joyes and comforts of her beloved. And now behold how the Spouse doth proceed in this matter.

V E R S. 12.

Let us goe up early to the Vineyards, let us see if the Vine flourish, whither the tender grape appeare, and the Pomegranates bud forth : there I will give thee my loves.

IN this verse, the Spouse declareth, what the benefit she and her beloved shall get, by remaining or lodging all night, in the Country Villages, or amongst

mongst the sweet Cypres trees, out of the Citie, namely, that they shall be ready early, to make triall of that, that they come and looke for. *Let us goe early to the Vineyards* (saith the Spouse) *let us see whether the Vine flourish*, that is, what appearings or likelyhood there is, of the approaching of the time of marriage, or of a neerer communion and fellowship with her beloved; she addeth.

Whither the tender (or small) grape appeare.

We may reade the words thus: *whither the first small grape open it selfe.* The first grape is that which is first in sprouting; and by opening it selfe, is meant its appearance, whereby it hath declared it self unto men, that it is now become a grape, and groweth, which at the first appearing of it; or, as it were in bud, can hardly be discerned. It followeth

Whither the Pomegranates flourish.

The nature and use of the Pomegranate hath been spoken of in Chap. 4. 13. the budding of this fruit (wherof also there was good store in those Countries) was a signe of the Spring time, and the flourishing thereof, as it were of the Summer at hand; by all these similitudes and comparisons, the Spouse declareth what the fruits of Christs presence will be, that there will be nothing but fruitfullnesse and flourishing, when Christ shall draw neere: Christ comes not empty to his Spouse, but he brings abundance of grace and sweetnesse with him.

Hence Observe.

That when Christ fls any soule with a divine presence, there is a great flourishing and springing forth, of all divine grace and glorie.

To

To this purpose is that in the Prophet *Isa. 27. 3. 6.* where it is said, *He causeth them that come of Jacob to take root, Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit.* And againe, it's said in *Isa. 56. 9. And I will bring forth (saith the Lord) a seed of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountaines, and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there.* And in *Ezek. 20. 40. 41.* *There shall the house of Israel, all of them in the Land serve me; there will I accept them, and there will I require your offerings, and the first fruits of your oblations, with all your holy things, I will accept you with your sweet savour, &c.* by all these similitudes, the excellency, beautie, sweetnesse, and glorie of the Spouse is set forth, and that shee shall flourish by vertue of the divine presence of God, and fellowship with Christ. This is further expressed in the last clause of the verse.

There will I give thee my loves.

This is the returne, that the Spouse makes to her beloved, namely, that shee will returne Christs loves upon him againe, that is, shee will manifest and make an open declaration of her unfeigned affection towards him. And she speaketh of loves in the plurall number, thereby to set out, both the excellency of the same, and also the abundance and plenty thereof. When the soule comes to be united to Christ, it is as it were swallowed up of love, and doth make evident manifestations thereof.

Hence Observe.

That the Saints doe manifest most love to Christ,
T y y y *when*

when he is manifesting most of himselfe in them.

When the Spouse is made as a fruitfull field, as a flourishing Vine and Pomegranate, then shee gives Christ her love, then her heart is full of divine love, and she will let out the whole streame of her sweet affections towards Christ.

In the next verse she mentioneth her fruits, and that she reserveth them wholly to Christ her well-beloved.

VERS. 13.

The mandrakes gave a swell, and at our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old which I have laid up for thee my beloved.

THese are most commendable things, that the Spouse speaketh of.

First, That she doth so flourish and abound in sweet things, which are, all the sweet fruits of the Spirit.

Secondly, That shee keepeth them only for the Lord, for the true Spouse is chaste, and faithfull unto Christ: Hence she saith, *My love, I have kept them for thee.*

Before wee speake any thing of the sense of this verse, wee will a little looke upon the words. The Hebrew *Dudaim*, is heretwaine *Mandrakes*, which is not used in all the old Testament, but only in this place, and *Gen. 30. 14, 15.* in which almost all Interpretours, both Jewes and Christians, doe turne it *Mandrakes*: these *Mandrakes* have allusion in name:

name to *Dodim*, loves forementioned : and *Dod* that is, beloved, as ſhe after calleth Chriſt. Some take the word more generally, for, all amiable flowers, ſuch as be faire and lovely : for the Spouſe is as a garden of ſweet flowers. *Mandrakes* grew in the field, and were found, in the dayes of wheat *Harveſt*, as in *Gen.* 30. 14. &c. It appeares by *Rachels* deſire of them, and by the ſmell here they are ſaid to give, that they were lovely and pleaſant : theſe lovely flowers, yeilding a ſavour ſheweth, that the Spouſe had ſweet things to ſmell unto, for the entertainment of her beloved.

Theſe *Mandrakes* are ſaid to give a ſmell or ſweet odour.

At our gates are all manner of ſweet fruits.

The word ſignifieth precious things. And by the gates or doores, which ſeemeth to be oppoſed unto the fields, where *Mandrakes* grew : ſignifieth, that both at whom and abroad, neere and farre, the ſame and odour of the Saints, ſpread it ſelfe : or by the gates wee may underſtand it, as an alluſion unto cuſtomes and orders, obſerved on marriage dayes, men being wont to ſtrow their houſes, doores, yea, and ſtreets and all, with ſweet ſmelling herbes.

New and old.

There is great ſtore and plenty of them, for this is an uſuall thing, by theſe termes to expreſſe abundance : ſee the phraſe in *Matth.* 13. 52. where the Kingdome of heaven is like the houſholder, which bringeth out of his treaſurie, things new and old. New,
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and old, signifieth variety and plenty, *Leviticus* 26. 10. And old fruits are often times better then new, as *Luke* 5. 39. Its added.

Which I have laid up for thee O beloved.

The Spouse declareth that these things are for to welcome her beloved, she desires that Christ may take pleasure and delight in them, she willingly offereth them all for his entertainment. Now from this verse thus opened.

Observe.

First, *That the Spouse is as a garden, full of sweete flowers.*

She is the Lords garden, the Lords field, where all kinde of divine and heavenly flowers grow, where is varietie and abundance of all sweetnesse, and fragran-
cie, she is an Orchard of *Pomegranates*, *Camphire*, and *Spiknard*, with the Trees of *frankincense*, *myrrhe* and *aloes*, with all the spices, the sweet Vine is in her, and the Mandrakes of a goodly smell, with pleasant fruits new and old; namely, all the sweet incomes of spirit and life from Christ, all the sweet refreshing delights of the Spirit.

Observe, Secondly,

That the Spouse doth entertaine Christ with all her sweetnesse.

These are things (saith she) that I have kept for my beloved. The Spouse honoureth Christ with all her sweet, pleasant fruits. As the favour, love, and goodnesse of God is great, which he hath layed up for those that feare him, *Psal.* 31. 20. so all the goodnes and fruits of spirit, and grace that flow from them, are
unto

unto his honour and prayse, consecrated unto his use and service, thus saith the Apostle, *for of him, and through him, and for him are all things, to him be glorie for ever, Rom. II. 36. Israel is holinesse, glorie, and honour to the Lord.* So endeth the seventh Chapter.

Canicles



Canticles.

Chap. 8. Vers. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

O that thou wert as my Brother, that sucked the breasts of my Mother, when I should find thee without, I would kisse thee, yet I should not be dispised.

I would lead thee, and bring thee into my Mothers house, who would instruct me: I would cause thee to drinke of spiced wine, of the juyce of my Pomegranate.

His left hand should be under my head, and his right hand should imbrace me.

I charge you, O daughters of Iernusalem, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love untill he please.

Who is this that commeth up from the Wildernesse, leaning upon her beloved? I raised thee up under the Apple-tree: there thy Mother brought thee forth, there she brought thee forth that bare thee.

Set me as a Seale upon thine heart, as a Seale upon thine Arme: for love is strong as death, jealousy is cruell as the Grave, the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame.



WE have had in this Song the condition and state of the Spouse, which hath been variable, and after diverse sorts: as even now calling and crying out for her well-beloved. Not long after, we have her, as it were, set down, and

and the Bridegroom calling upon her to arise and come away; yea, sometimes she is not onely set downe, but also she is laid downe, and asleep: the Saints doe not continue alwayes alike, but however they swarve for a time, yet they returne, and their end is commendable. And therefore the Church is here, even to the end of the Song, declaring her faith, and good affection towards Christ.

But to come to the words themselves of this Chapter: First, in generall, the Spouse doth declare what a great desire she hath to be in his presence, and to retaine him with her, which ariseth from a vehement love, whose heat cannot be quenched, as she expresseth in the sequell of the Chapter. Christ and the Spouse be of one family; as Brothers and Sisters doe dwell together in familiarity, each doth usually know where to find the other. According to this she saith,

O that thou wert as my Brother, that sucked the Breasts of my Mother: when I should find thee without, I would kisse thee, yet I should not be despised.

In this verse the Spouse declareth her earnest affection unto Christ, wishing that she might continually enjoy him as a most faithfull friend. We have in this verse,

First, an exclamation or wish, expressing her fervent desire, *O that thou wert as my Brother.* This wish is amplified, by saying, *That sucked the breasts of my Mother.*

Secondly, the resolution of the Spouse in case she had obtained her desire, in these words, *When I should find thee without, I would kisse thee.* This also is amplified, wherein she doth, as it were, set feare and shame aside,

side, by adding, *Yet I should not be ashamed.*

O that thou wert as my Brother, &c.

Some read the words thus, *O if some would give thee, or, who will give thee.* Such phrases are often used for formes of wishing in the Scripture, as in *Psal. 14. 7. Who shall give Salvation to Israel? That is, O that the Salvation of Israel were come.* The Apostle alludes to this forme of speech, when he saith, *Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? Rom. 7. 24.* It is an expression of an earnest wish or desire in the Spouse here, wherein she doth declare her earnest desire of the brother-hood, love, and fellowship of Christ, whereby she might manifest her love to him againe. Her desire of him is, that he would be to her,

As a Brother.

That is, most faithfull, friendly, and loving. See *Gen. 13. 8. & Psal. 133. 1.* Brother-hood signifies some neer conjunction and relation, either by nature, or by Covenant, *Zach. 11. 14.* Such as are companions in like condition, quality, or action, are called brethren, *Prov. 18. 9. Gen. 49. 5.* Now Christ is not onely the Brother of the Spouse in respect of his humanity, taking on him the same flesh and blood, *Heb. 2. 14.* but also by that onenesse in fellowship and communion in the Spirit, having one father, one blessednesse and glory. Thus Christ calls his Saints *Brethren, Heb. 2. 11, 12.* in respect of that spirituall union and fellowship between them. It's added.

That sucked the breasts of my Mother.

The Spouse is not contented onely to have Christ

as a Brother, but as a most naturall, kind Brother, because many times it falleth out, that brethren are at great jarres, through the neglect or forgetfullnesse of those brotherly bonds between them: therefore the Spouse desireth that Christ may be a most naturall, kind-hearted brother to her, as one, that sucked her Mother, for betweene brethren of the same Mother, the love and affections are the most ardent, as is testified by Joseph, in his affections toward his Brother Benjamin, Gen. 43. 29. 30. By the Mother here we may understand the heavenly *Jerusa'em*, which is above, which the Apostle calls, *The Mother of us all*, Gal. 4. 26. To suck the breasts of this Mother is to partake, and enjoy the sweet refreshing comforts of the Church, or assembly of the first borne, to be refreshed with the fattenesse, and sweetnesse of Gods house, towit, the sweet consolations of the Spirit, *Isa.* 66. 10. 11. Now we must know that Christ and his people make but one body, and is mystically called Christ, *1 Cor.* 12. 12. and therefore here, where it is said, that Christ doth suck these breasts, it is meant of Saints, or Christ in the Saints is refreshed and comforted.

Hence Observe, First,

That the Spouse is very earnest and desirous of a neer brotherhood and communion with Christ. O that thou wert as my Brother, &c. Nothing satisfies the Saints but fellowship with the Father and the Sonne, nothing but a sweet communion with Christ, in all his graces. The Saints are onely delighted with his love and sweetnesse, and continually desire in a most comfortable and familiar way to enjoy his divine presence.

Secondly Observe,

That Christ is refreshed in his Saints refreshments. For

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as you heard before, he and his Saints are one body, and hence it is, that when Saints are begotten unto God, *Christ is formed* in them, *Gal. 4. 19.* and as they are nourished by the sincere milke of the word, so is Christ also nourished, & grows more & more in stature and fullnesse. For that which is properly the person of the Saint, or the Saint-ship it selfe, is part of Christ: Christ is diffused into all his Saints, and they all make but one compleat body, and therefore as the body is said to suck the breasts of spirituall consolation, Christ may also be said to suck those breasts, for it is Christ in the Saints that is nourished: so when the Saints increase, it is the increasings of the Lord, and the growth of the Saints is the growth of Christ.

It followeth.

When I should find thee without, I would kisse thee, yet I should not be despised.

Here is the resolution of the Spouse, *When I finde thee, or, though I find thee in the streets,* that is, in open and publique place, as it were. See *Luke 14. 21.* This shews the readinesse and willingnesse of the Spouse, both to goe forth and meet, and also to welcomie and entertaine Christ, it noteth her dilligence and care to find, and to retaine Christ, as in *Song 3. 2. 4.*

I would kisse thee, yet I should not be despised.

To Kisse is a signe of honour, love, and obedience, as was noted in *Song 1. 2.* and the meaning is, that the Spouse would neither be ashamed, or afraid to perform the office of love and affection towards him, neither should any contemne or scorne her: that is, either they should not scorne her, having obtained her beloved,

loved, or else she would not regard any scorne that should be cast upon her.

Hence Observe,

First, That Saints are ready to entertaine and wellcome Christ.

Hence it's said here, that the Spouse would meet him, with all readinesse to take hold of him, and to imbrace him. The Saints are impatient without Christ, and are most ready to give entertainment unto him. Secondly Observe,

That it is an honourable action, and worthy of much praise to entertaine and imbrace Christ. It is true, the world is apt to vex, scorne, and contemne the Saints, but yet they are never ashamed to owne Christ: but she doth meet, kisse, and imbrace him, even in the open streets. But though the blind world should contemne the Saints, yet the Lord will honour them that honour him, 1 Sam. 20. 30. And if any man serve Christ, *him will the Father honour*, John 12. 26. The Saints shall appeare in the brightnesse of Christs glory, which is far above the contempt of the world, and being thus cloathed, they are not afraid or ashamed of Christ, of professing his name and truth, in the open streets of the world. Thus much for the Spouses wish, as also her resolution, in which she doth farther proceed in the next verse.

V E R S. 2.

I would lead thee, and bring thee into my Mothers house, who would instruct me, I would cause thee to drinke of spiced wine, of the juyce of my Pomegranate.

After the Spouse had expressed her wish, and what advantage she gained thereby, she sheweth what

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returne she would make unto Christ for granting her desire. *I would lead thee, and bring thee, &c.*

We must understand in these words that the Spouse taketh on her the person of Christ, and speaketh that of her selfe which belongeth to him; and by declaring what she would doe unto her beloved, shews what she would have Christ doe unto her. And therefore we must consider the Spouse, together with her head Christ, and so she is called Christ, in 1 Cor. 12. 12. That is, Christ mysticall, or Christ in a divine mystery. *I would lead thee, I would bring thee, &c.*

She doubleth the word, as it were, to shew the joyfullnesse of her heart in thinking of the matter she is now in speaking of. And in that she saith, *I would lead thee*, she meaneth with all honour and solemnity, with joy and gladnesse. Thus Kings and great ones are said to be lead and brought along, *Isa. 60. 11. Psal. 45. 15, 16.* So here, the Spouse speaking in the person of Christ, declares what she desires he should doe unto her, towit, that he would lead and bring her into his holy Mountaine, as in *Psal. 43. 3.* that he would comfortably lead her by the light of his Spirit.

Hence Observe,

That the Saints desire onely to be led and directed by Christ. For the Spouse here by declaring her resolution, sheweth what she desireth Christ to doe unto her: it is true, that the Saints in some sence may be said to lead Christ by seeking of his face, by stirring up themselves to take hold of his strength, as in *Isa. 64. 1. 7.* yet most properly it is Christ that leadeth his people: his truth, and the light of his Spirit is like the cloud of fire that led the Children of *Israel* in the Wilderness, and doth continually direct and guide them. Now followeth the place into which she would lead him.

Into

Into the house of my Mother.

Here the Spouse alludeth to the custome in those dayes, which was to bring the Bride and Bidegroom also, into the house of either of their Parents : See *Gen. 24. 97.* where *Isaac* is said to have brought *Rebeckah* into the Tent of *Sarah* his Mother. It is the manner of the Hebrews (as hath been noted heretofore in this Song) to call some whole thing or body, by the name of Father or Mother, and the parts derived from the same, by the names of Sonnes and Daughters. So here, Christ and the Saints, making up one Church or body, which is called the new *Jerusalem*, which commeth downe from God, out of which Christ and all Saints spring : this new *Jerusalem* is called the *Mother of us all*, in *Gal. 4. 26.* But of this we have spoken already in Chap. 3. vers. 4. and therefore I shall passe this, and proceed to the next words. *Who would instruct me.*

This clause standeth doubtfull whither we shall Translate it, *Thou shalt teach me*, or, *she shall teach me* : for in the Hebrew tongue, in the future, the same word standeth for the third person feminine, that is for the second Masculine. And so it standeth indifferent here by the word, whither we say, thou shalt teach me, or, she shall teach me : true it is, that Christ is the teacher of his Church, in a double respect. 1. In that he alone teacheth by the light of his Spirit. But the Church (who is the heavenly *Jerusalem*, and Mother of us all) doth as an instrument teach, and instruct her particular Members with the heavenly doctrine of the Gospell. We may take it that she saith to Christ, *Thou shalt teach me*, for so runs the new Covenant, *That every man shall not teach his neighbor, saying know the Lord, for they shall all know me*, saith the Lord. So that the Saints should not depend upon mans teaching, but upon Christ's the true Prophet. Hence:

Hence Observe.

That the Saints desire most of all, to be under the teachings of Christ.

This was the end of the Spouse, in bringing Christ in to her mothers house, namely, that he might teach and instruct her by his Spirit. And thus it is prophesied, how that in the last dayes, many people should say, *Come, and let us go up to the house of the God Jacob, and will teach us of his wayes, &c. Isa. 2, 2, 3.* See also *Mi. chap. 4. 1, 2.* Christ tels his Disciples in *John 16. 25.* That the time was comming, he would shew them plainly of the Father, its Christ that doth unmaske and unvaile the face of his Father, and helpe us to a manifestation and light of it: Christ is the lively Image of God, *2 Cor. 4. 4.* He is the Brightnesse of his glorie, and the expresse Character of his person, *Heb. 1. 3.* there is no excellency in the Father, which is not manifest in the Sonne, and by the Sonne wee may come to know it: so saith the Apostle, *God who hath commanded light to shine out of darkenesse, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glorie of God, in the face of Jesus Christ, 2 Cor. 6. 6.* If there be such a bright vision of divine glorie manifested by Christ, how sweet, how comfortable, and how much to be desired are the teachings of Christ then, who is as it were the beames and brightnesse of Gods glorie shining out upon us?

The effects of Christs teaching is set forth in the next words.

I would cause thee to drinke of spiced wine, of the juyce of my Pomegranate.

According to the similitude in earthly things, the Spouse

Spoule professeth to entertaine Christ with a dainty banquet in her mothers house, for that is meant by *spiced wine*, and *juice of the Pomegranate*.

By *spiced wine*, she meaneth such wee call *Ipoocras*, which besides the nature and strength of the wine it selfe, it is much strengthened by composition, mixture or confection of many Spices with it: So that by the strength and pleasantnesse of this composition of sweet spices, the heart is strengthened and warmed, and the senses much refreshed and satisfied, with the pleasant smell thereof: Such compositions as these, were put into the holy incense and oyle, *Exod. 30. 24, 25*. Such were also used for banquetting, as this place manifesteth.

The juice of my Pomegranat.

Or, *The sweet wine made of my Pomegranate*: the word here turned *juice*, or *sweet wine*, signifies generally a moisture, which either by expressing or treading, is fetcht from any fruit, for it is derived of a word, that signifieth to *expresse* or *tread downe*, but because he addeth *Pomegranates*, we may take it for the moisture, *juice*, or *liquor*, that is or may be wung from them. In a word, she meaneth, that if she might indeed be partaker of Christ, and enjoy sweetnesse and fellowship with him, she would most comfortably and joyfully entertaine, and receive him, for under these metaphors, taken and borrowed from an earthly banquet she meaneth nothing else, but the spiritual entertainment of her beloved, and that his teaching should not be fruitlesse in her, but she would honour Christ with graces, and being sweetned with the spices of his spirit, the fruit thereof should redound to him.

Hence

Hence Observe.

That the Saints honour Christ with the fruits of his owne Spirit.

When Christ administ'reth to us by his Spirit, he giveth us wine to drinke, as in *Iſa.* 55. 1. 3. And when wee bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, he counteth himſelfe as refreshed with wine, as in Chap. 5. 1. This is the spirituall entertainement, that the Spouſe giveth her beloved, ſhe preſents him with a dainty banquet of ſpiced wine, the fruits of his owne ſpirit, praiſe and glorie, which is very pleaſing unto him, which is contrary to that cup in the womans hand, full of abominations and filthineſſe of her fornication, to wit, the fruits of the fleſh and Antichriſt, with which wine the inhabitants of the earth were made drunke, *Revel.* 17. 2, 4. The fruits of divine preſence, and of the ſpirit of Chriſt in the Saints is ſweet, comfortable, and pleaſant, like to *ſpiced wine*, and the *juice of the Pomegranate*. It followeth in the next verſe.

V E R. S. 3.

His left hand ſhould be under my head, and his right hand ſhould embrace me.

AS before the Spouſe had ſet out how ſhe would receive and entertaine her beloved: ſo now ſhe being privie to her owne infirmities, and deſirous of ſtrength from Chriſt, deſireth ſuſtenance and ſtrength of him, whole grace would be ſufficient for her, whole ſtrength is made perfect in weakeneſſe, *2 Cor.* 12. 9. wee may underſtand the words prayer-wiſe, *Let thine hand be under my head, &c.* ſhe ſheweth how he would comfort

fort her, namely, that for her ease, he would put his left hand under her head, as men commonly do to sick and infirme persons. *And his right hand doth embrace me. viz.* most comfortably and lovingly as dearest friends doe one another.

See this verse wholly expounded before in Chap. 2. 6. there being no difference but this, namely, that she affirmeth the thing in present action, and hereby weighing the earnest love of Christ towards her she increaseth in her hope and confidence in him, assuring her selfe, that if she may enjoy his comfortable and continuall presence, it would be a very happy thing.

Hence Observe.

That the Saints only rest satisfied in the armes of Christ.

Hence it is, that the Spouse doth desire, that Christ should support, comfort and uphold her with both his hands: were it not for the armes of Christs love and protection, the Spouse could not subsist; but Christ doth as it were comfort, embrace, and sustaine his Church with both his armes.

These words having been spoken of before, I shall passe to the next verse.

VER S. 4.

I charge you O daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stirre not up, nor awake my love, untill he please.

THe Spouse enjoying these great mercies and blessings from Christ, chargeth all her daughters, to wit, her fellow-members, to walke so thankfull and

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fruitfull, toward God, and lovingly and hel pfully one towards another, that no occasion be given of any alteration of their happinesse, and in this Charge she deales very seriously, saying,

I charge you, or, I adjure you; that is, by oath: that you grieve not this my beloved Spouse, that may hinder our comfortable societie one from another: and this she speaketh unto the daughters of Jerusalem, or fellow friends of the Spouse. See this expounded before, chap. 2. 7. Also chap. 3. 5. Why should ye stirre up, that is, doe not stirre up: there is no reason or cause why you should deale so discourteously with him, sith in his rest standeth your owne good: or it will not be for your profit and ease, to disturbe this my love, whom I so tenderly affect.

Untill he please: that is, till he himselve will; and the Spouse useth this as a reason to discourage them from awaking him: be not over confident to thinke it will be good for him, and for you, that he should be raised up, or awaked before he please, for he knows the best and fittest time.

Hence Observe.

That Christians should not go about to raise up Christ, till himselve is pleased to arise.

Where the Spirit of Christ is, there is liberty, there is power to act indeed: if the Lord be risen and awake in thee, there is life and activitie, and therefore why should wee awake the Lord till he please: there is so much formalitie in Professors, as draws their resolutions into a method, as because such a day, or such a time is come, I must doe such or such a thing, and so take up things by custome: and Christians must discourse and performe duties, whither the Spirit saith
yea,

yea, or no, but God will bring judgement into victory, and the Spirit of the Lord shall carry all before it: but wee must stay till the beloved please.

VERS. 5.

Who is this that cometh up from the Wildernesse, leaning upon her beloved? I raised thee up under the apple-tree, there thy mother brought thee forth, there she brought thee forth that beare thee.

THE Church going about to declare the love she carried towards her head, and husband Christ, doth in this verse, in the first part of it, by way of demand, speak of her self: and in the latter part, taking upon her the person of Christ, she sheweth what great favours and graces she had received from him. There is nothing by the speech it selfe, that discovers whether Christ or his Spouse uttered these words. But the Hebrew text declareth it to be spoken by the Spouse, because this clause, *I raised thee up*, &c. And also this.

Thy mother conceived thee: are spoken in the masculine gender, as to a man, and not as unto a woman: and so wee take them for the words of the Spouse, setting forth the vehement and ardent loves of hers unto Christ, in respect of those many favours she had received from him.

In the words then she setteth forth the vehemencie of her love.

First as it were by comparifon, saying:

Who is this that commeth up, &c.

Secondly the place from which she ascended: *from the Wildernesse.*

Thirdly, The manner of her ascension, *leaning upon her beloved.*

Fourthly, the meanes of her ascension, *I raised thee up under an Apple-tree, there thy Mother brought thee forth &c.*

Who is this, or, who is she (for so we may reade the words) *that commeth up; &c.* Some thinke that this speech implyeth the springing up of a new Church, conducted by Christ through the Wildernesse of this world, others understand it to be the speech of the daughters of *Jerusalem* admiring at the encrease of faith and grace in the Spouse: but we may understand it of the Spouse her selfe: admiring at her selfe, being filled with grace, and being cloathed with so many mercies by Christ, as if she should say, where is she to be found, that hath shewed the like love to her welbeloved, that I have shewed unto mine? that hath taken such travaile, and indured so many afflictions, passed through so many perils, to come to her beloved, as I have done to come unto mine? Hence Observe.

That the Saints do admire their own ascension unto Christ.

It is their glorie and Crowne, it is their joy and boasting all the day: but wee must also know, that the boasting of the Saints, is not from any thing of their owne, they cannot so admire their own strength or parts, as in the power and strength of Christ, by which they are brought up unto him. Now that then which the Saints doe so much admire is, that shee should ascend up from the earth, to live in Christ and that

that in the power and goodnesse of Christ.

Secondly, The place from whence she ascended is mentioned.

From the Wildernesse.

The Wildernesse is sometimes taken for the people of this world, out of which the people of God are called and chosen, *Ezek. 20. 35. John 15. 19.* but wee may rather take it here for the former state of the Spouse, in the state of sinne and ignorance under the bondage of the powers of darkenesse, from which she escaped by Christ; for the *Wildernesse* was a drie and thirsty land, a land of drought, and of the shadow of dearth, *Ezek. 19. 13. Jer. 2. 6.* The Wildernesse is cloathed with no beautie, whereby men should delight in it, or desire to dwell there, but it is rather a place of Dragons, Foxes, and Tigris, and all wilde and ravenous Beasts.

Hence Observe:

That the Saints ascend up to Christ out of a low, darke, desolate Wildernesse.

Their state is a Wildernesse condition, desolate, lost and forlorne, till they ascend up unto Christ: there be many dangers in a Wildernes: so the soule is in a lost, dangerous condition, till it ascend unto Christ, the true *Canaan*, and Land of plenty and rest. A man in a Wildernesse knows not which way he goes: whether forward or backward; no more doth the soule, while it walks in the Wildernes of darknesse and confusion, under the power of hell and death, surely, this must needs be a blessed ascension, to ascend out of a desolate Wildernes unto Christ the true center and rest of the soule. It followeth.

Leaning

Leaning upon her beloved.

Here is set downe the manner of the Spouses ascension, *Leaning upon her beloved, or, adjoyning, associating her selfe with her beloved.* The Spouse doth not use this speech onely to note her love towards Christ, as it was the custome for men to leane upon them whom they best liked, as appears, 2 Kings 5. 18. but also to set out the strength and comfort she had from him, without whom, by reason of her owne weaknesse, she had never beene able to get out of the Wildernesse.

Hence Observe,

That the Saints ascend up unto Christ by the assistance of diuine power from Christ.

All the strength of the Spouse was in the power of Christ, who upheld her, and sustained her steps, carrying her through all dangers and difficulties. The Spouse is by Christ made perfect, stablished, strengthened, and settled, 1 Pet. 5. 10. This diuine assistance was foretold by the Prophet, in Gods dealing with the people of Israel, when he put his holy Spirit in his people, *and led them through the deep, as an horse in the wildernesse, they stumbled not; as a beast goeth downe into the valley, the spirit of the Lord quietly led them: so didst thou lead thy people, to make thy selfe a glorious name,* Isa. 63. 11. 13. 14. So here, the Spouse acknowledgeth all her strength and stay to be from Christ, and from the power of his might. It followeth in the next verse.

I raised thee up under the Apple tree.

The Spouse is said sometimes to raise up Christ, as in Psal. 44. 24. *Stir up, why sleepest thou Lord?* And the Saints are said to stir up themselves, and take hold of his

his strength, in *Isa.* 64. 7. but the Spouse being but the instrument of Gods power and goodnesse, she doth as it were speake in the person of Christ: and as Christ gives life to his people, so his people are said to give life to him, and raise him up, as it were from sleep, and from death. This raising up was under the *Apple-tree*, the tree of life and grace, whose shadow and fruit had beene delightfull to her, to which tree Christ himselfe was likened Chap. 2. 3. So that the Spouse is said to raise up Christ in his owne power, under the Apple-tree, to wit, under his shadow and fruit, whereby she her selfe was comforted and refreshed. Hence Observe,

That Christ is raised up by, or in the Saints by his owne power. Though the Saints are said to raise up Christ, it's under the Apple-tree, it's in Christs owne power: so it is no more but Christs raising himselfe in the Saints: Christ by the divine power raised himselfe out of the Grave, so by that divine power he doth rise in the Saints, by which power they are said to raise up Christ: and therefore what Christ is said to doe unto the Saints, they likewise are said to doe the same unto him, as to *raise him up*, &c. The Saintship, or the proper person of the Saint is Christ, as he is given out, and distributed to all Saints, who all make up the body of Christ: So that as Christ is said to raise and stir up the Saints, so also they may be said to raise and quicken Christ. It followeth.

There thy mother brought thee forth, there she brought thee forth that bare thee.

It is the heavenly *Jernsalem*, the generall assembly, and Church of the first-borne, which are written in
Heaven,

Heaven, that bring forth Christ into the world, Christ is begotten, and brought forth in these: This heavenly Jerusalem, or Church of the first-borne, is the Mother of Christ, this is she that brought him forth into the world, or, as it may be rendered, *That painfully brought him forth*: that is, did travell with much paine and sorrow: So that as there is paine and sorrow in women that bring forth Children, so there is in the Spouse in her bringing forth Christ.

Hence Observe,

First, *That Christ is conceived and brought forth in all his Saints.*

The Spouse is hereby Christs mother, even all the faithfull that travell with Christ. The Apostle saith in Gal. 4. 19. *My little Children, of whom I travell in birth untill Christ be formed in you*; so that Christ is formed and brought forth in every Saint. And in Rev. 12. 2. the Church is compared to a *woman with Child*. The Prophet tells us, *That unto us a Child is borne*, Isa. 9. 6. So this holy Child Jesus is begotten and brought forth in his divine appearance in all the Saints.

Secondly Observe,

That the travelling with, and bringing forth of Christ into the world, is with much trouble and paine.

Hence it is said in Rev. 12. the Church was in travell, and pained to be delivered; for as Child-birth is accompanied with many pangs and sorrows, so is the bringing forth of Christ in the hearts of men. There is outward sorrow and trouble, according to the words of the Apostle, when he saith, *In much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tossings to and fro, in labours, in watchings, in fastings,* &c. 2 Cor. 6. 4, 5. And thus the Church declareth, in
Isa.

Iſa. 26. 17. Like as a woman with Child, that draweth neer the time of her delivery, is in paine, crieth out in her pangs: ſo have we beene in thy ſight, O Lord. So there is abundance of inward pain and trouble when Chriſt is formed in the mind and ſpirit: there is a ſtrugling and reſiſting, by all the powers of fleſh and darkneſſe: this Dragon ſeeks to deſtroy the Child Jeſus, there was a type of this in *Herod*, when he ſought to kill Chriſt, when he was borne upon the earth: So the powers of fleſh and darkneſſe, ſet againſt this delivery, they hinder what they can, but cannot deſtroy this Child; it is preſerved ſtill, though it be in *Egypt*, yea, though it ſhould be crucified in *Egypt*, it ſhall riſe againe, and live and prevaile. Now in the next verſe the Spouſe breaks forth into a vehement requeſt, that ſhe may be joyned more neerly unto her beloved, and that he will alwayes have her in mind, rendring a reaſon, that the vehemency and ſtrength of her love is ſuch, as by no meanes it can be overcome: this is ſet forth in this verſe, and the next following: but firſt commeth her requeſt in the firſt verſe that followeth.

V E R S. 6.

Set me as a Seale upon thine heart, as a Seale upon thine Arme: for love is ſtrong as death, jealousie is cruell as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a moſt vehement flame.

THe Spouſe here deſireth a farther testimony and evidence of Chriſts divine love, to be given in unto her, that ſhe may be the more confirmed in his love towards her, that ſhe may be firmly engraven, as the engraving of a Seale or Signet upon his heart.

B b b b b

Firſt,

First, then we have the Spouses earnest desire of Christs deep affection to her, and continuall remembrance of her, *Set me as a Seale upon thine heart, as a Seale upon thine arme.* Which request of hers is urged by a motive taken from the strength and depth of her affection to him, which she declareth.

First, by comparing her affections to 3. things.

1. To Death, *It's strong as death.*
2. To the Grave, *It's cruell as the grave.*
3. To Fire, *It hath a most vehement flame.*

Secondly, it is set forth by comparing her affections to two things, as lesse then her affections, yet they be of great force: this is in the seventh verse.

1. Her affections are such, as many waters cannot quench them.

2. She prized them to the whole substance of any mans house, which would be contemned if it were offered for to withdraw her affections from her beloved. But first her request.

Set me as a Seale upon thine heart, &c.

Set me, or, *put me as a Seale, &c.* That is, let me be deeply engraven, as a Seale is, into thy heart and affections, let the love and remembrance of me, take a deep impression in thee, yea, even as a Signet in thy heart and minde; *And as a Seale or Signet on thy Arme;* that is, let it be continually in thy sight and remembrance, and let me be as dear and pretious unto thee, as the Signet that thou carriest about thee; and how precious that was, and highly esteemed, may appeare in that *Zerubbabell* had a promise made to him, that the Lord would make him *as a signet*, Hag. 2. 24. And on the contrary side, in that *Jehoiakim* is threatned, that if he were as the Signet of Gods right hand, yet the Lord would

would pluck him from thence, Jer. 22. 24. The heart signifieth inward love and affection, and the arme signifieth the remembrance or outward manifestation of that love, by helping and sustaining, and therefore it's said, *Thou redeemest thy people with thy arme*, Psal. 77. 16. And also it's said, *He will feed his flock like a Shepheard, he will gather the Lambs with his arme, and carry them in his bosome*, Isa. 40. 10. 11. The summe is, that it is a request full of affection and earnestnesse, which the Spouse maketh unto her beloved, as if she had said: Seing I have yeilded through thy goodnesse, such testimonies and tokens of my unfeigned love, I beseech thee againe on the other side, to carry me continually in thy mind, to have me alwayes in thy sight; to be (as was promised to the Daughters of Zion) *engraven upon the palmes of his hands, and continually before him*, Isa. 49. 15. 16. that she might be alwayes before his eyes, on his hands and fingers, as men use to weare Jewells about their necks, and upon their breasts, and put Rings, especially their Signets and Seals, upon their fingers, both to have them alwayes in readinesse, and to shew the high account they made of them.

Hence Observe,

That the Saints earnestly desire to be nearest in Christs heart, to be alwayes in Christs mind. That which is in the heart of man is nearest unto him, and that which he mindeth most he loveth most: So the Spouse desireth here to be deep in Christs heart and affection, to be engraven on his armes. The Spouse would be neerly joyned to Christ, as a precious Jewell, both in his heart, and upon his hand, so that he may alwayes minde her, and have her in his sight, for we know, that whatsoever a man loveth with the greatest love,

B b b b b 2

that

that he desireth to be nearest unto, yea, fastned unto it. And the Spouses confidence in her beloved, is, that he will esteeme her as an unseparable Ornament of his glory: so she is to him, as *Aarons* Pectorall unto his breast, and his stones of remembrance upon his shoulders. In the Pectorall or Breast-plate were *twelve stones* (like the ingravings of a Signet or Seale) in which were engraven the names of the twelve Tribes of *Israel*, to shew, that the High Priest should carry about him a memoriall of the people continually, *Exod. 28. 21*. The Priest did not onely beare the names of the Tribes upon his heart, but also upon his shoulders, before the Lord, for a memoriall, *Exod. 28. 11. 12*. So in like manner here, the Spouse desireth Christ to be her mercifull high Priest in things pertaining to God, *Heb. 2. 17*. That he would guide, feed, comfort her, that he would be all mercy, love, and sweetnesse to her, and that he would shew unto her more then Motherly affection; according as his title is *πολυπαισις*. One of many commiserations, *Jam. 5. 11*. And now she rendereth the reason of her desire, from the nature and force of love, in that she saith,

For love is strong as death.

This is the first comparison whereby she doth expresse the force of her love.

Death is exceeding strong, it seduceth all sorts of people, high and low, young and old, and overcometh the strongest man, *Psal. 89. 48*. neither will it accept of any compassion, nor yield to any opposition, we can make no agreement with it, for if we consider the great might of Princes, of Kings, and of Empe-

Emperours, yea, of all the mighty Monarches in the world, death hath subdued and cast them downe. Who hath been so strong as to resist death? where hath that might been found, that could ever eschew his stroake?

Hence Observe.

That the strong affection of a Saint towards Christ, cannot be subdued by any trouble or force whatsoever

Christ hath been ever welcome to the Saints, though they enjoyed him with the greatest affliction: Peter would venture to goe to Christ upon the boisterous waves of the Sea: Lord (saith he) *if thou bid me come unto thee.* The Saints finde abundance of sweetnesse in Christ, which doth more then countervaille with all the afflictions and troubles they meet withall for his sake: Hence was that resolution of Job, *though he kill me yet I will trust in him:* such is the force of that indeared affection of the Saints unto Christ, that though they walke in the middest of feares and troubles, yet none of such things can take off the edge of their affection towards him.

The second comparison of her love, followeth in the next clause.

Jealousie is cruel as the grave.

Jealousie is a mixt affection of zeale, or fervent love, and carries wrath and rage with it, and it is sometimes used in a good, and sometimes in an evill sense. In an evill sense it taken for envie, *Acts 5. 17.* sometimes for a blinde misguided zeale, *Rom. 10. 2.* Sometimes for bitter zeale or envying, *Jam. 3. 14.* and lastly, for counterfeited jealousy or pretended love, *Gal. 4. 17.* But in a good sense, zeale is taken for a godly

ly jealousie, 2 Cor. 11. 2. for an holy emulation, 1 Cor. 12. 31. and also for an extreame heat of all the affections, towards one whom wee esteeme, burning in our love to him, our desire of him, our joy in him, our indignation against any that speake any thing against him : of such a jealousie wee are to understand here, which the Spouse saith is,

Cruel, or hard as the grave.

She meaneth, that this godly jealousie, wherewith her heart was so affected towards Christ, could not be conquered any more then the grave, it being fierce and inexorable as hell it selfe, which devoureth all that are cast into it.

Hence note.

That the love of jealousie and zeale in the Saints, is a consuming love.

So saith Christ, the zeale of thy house hath consumed me : it causeth one to spend all his strength, for the person whom he thus loves; and so saith the Apostle in respect of his great love, *I am ready to be spent for you*, for the love of Christ is a constraining love, 2 Cor. 5. 14. And the godly are eaten up for Gods glorie, Psal. 69. 9. To the force of the grave, she compareth the heat and vehemencie of her love, so that still she doth shew, that she must needs covet to be joyned as a signet most neere unto her beloved. In the next clause she saith.

The coales thereof, are coales of fire, which hath a most vehement flame.

The Spouse compareth her love to another thing, namely, to fire, not only because it warmeth and maketh hot, but also because it kindleth and increaseth

creaseth to a burning flame.

In the first part of this speech it is said, *the coales thereof are coales, &c.* that is, they are exceeding hot coales, *ferie darts or arrows*, the word signifieth that which *flieth and burneth*; and sometimes is applied to *judgements* that flie abroad, as in *Dent. 32. 24.* And to *arrows*, *Psal. 76. 3.* Here it is taken for the burning coales of inflamed love, that pierce and inflame the heart, and cannot be quenched, and that is the reason also why she addeth.

Which hath a most vehement flame.

This declares it to be a great & wonderful flame: for in the Hebrew it is, *shalhebeth-jah*, *the consuming flame of God*, that is, excellent or extraordinary flames, piercing and devouring lightning: for in scripture phrase the things of God are transcendently excellent, as the *Harpes of God*, *Revel. 15. 2.* The *Trees of God*, *Psal. 1. 3.* And the *mountaines of God*, *Psal. 36. 6.* by this fire is meant the fire of the Spirit, which is compared to fire, *Matth. 3. 11.* So the Spirit is as a fire in the Saints, that kindles a flame of divine love towards God.

Hence Observe.

That the fire of divine love is kindled in us by the Spirit of God.

It is the peculiar worke of the Spirit, to inflame our hearts to Christ, for here the Spouse letteth out the greatnesse of the effect, by the greatnesse of the cause: so the flame of God is a most mighty flame: so the love of the Spouse is most fitly compared unto a vehement fire, where there be hot burning coales, and a great flame, because it is kindled by the divine

vine flame of everlasting burnings, where the soule feeleth the love of Christ, it is even set on fire with love towards him, even with a hot burning love: this flame is the flame of God, because it is kindled in the heart of a Saint by the Spirit. These flames of God, these divine and vehement flames, being kindled by the Spirit, cannot be quenched with earthly things, as it is declared in the next verse.

V E R S. 7.

Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drowne it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned.

THE Spouse proceedeth in setting forth the earnestnesse of her affections towards Christ, shewing, that since her love was as a mighty and excellent fire within, it could not be put out, no not with many afflictions, troubles and persecutions

Many waters cannot quench love, &c.

By *waters*, and *floods* is usually meant in Scripture of afflictions, persecutions, troubles, and temptation, which accompany the Saints, and also of persecutors themselves, who are often called *waters*, and *floods of water*, as appeares in *Psal.* 69. 1. Also *Rev.* 17. 15. *Psal.* 124. 4, 5. And *Matth.* 7. 25. 27. *Isa.* 8. 7, 8. *Dan.* 9. 26. So here is signified, that the Love of Christ wherewith the Saints are inflamed, is such as cannot be quenched with any calamities or persecutions whatsoever.

Hence

Hence Observe.

That the love of the Saints towards Christ is an invincible love.

As it is written of Christs love, that nothing can separate his people from it: so here the Spouse affirmeth, that her love towards him cannot be put out; wee may observe the frame of the Spouses speech according to her former comparison, when she said, *The coales thereof are coales, and the fire of the flame of God:* for what fire is there, but many waters will quench, at least if floods of waters doe overflow it? but this heavenly fire cannot be quenched, the floods cannot put it out. The Dragon doth cast a flood out of his mouth, *Revel. 12.* but all in vaine, for his love cannot be quenched. So the Apostle teacheth, when he saith, *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, anguish, persecution, famine, nakednesse, perill, the sword?* as it is written, *for thy sake are wee killed, all the day long, wee are counted as sheepe for the slaughter, nevertheless in all these things, wee are more then conquerours through him that loved us, Rom. 8. 35.* There is one clause to come wherein she saith:

If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would be utterly contemned.

If a man would give all his substance: as silver, gold, all wealth and riches, it could not purchase this love; neither could the love of these, winne the heart of the Spouse from Christ, for she affirmeth here, that if all treasures should be offered her, to draw her love from Christ, she would utterly contemne them. So that if any man did thinke, either to buy this love of her, or

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to

to get it from her, it were nothing, it were but labour lost; and therefore she addeth.

It would utterly be contemned, or as it is in the Hebrew, in contemning they would condemn it; that is, they would certainly contemne it, or it would be altogether wholly contemned; for this is the manner of the Hebrew tongue, when they highly promise to double, and when they highly dispraise, to double the word also: See chap. 1. vers. 1. In summe, she meaneth by this verse, namely, to declare, that her love was so firme and fast to Christ, that it could not be rent or pulled from her to any other, either by any force, or by fraud: nor by flatterie or faire promises.

Hence Observe.

That worldly riches cannot purchase divine love, nor get it away from those that have it.

All the treasures, and pleasures, and credit, which the substance of any mans house may procure, shall be of no reckoning, either to get or purchase the love of Christ, or to withhold the Saints from loving him. The Spouse doth so set her heart upon Christ, that she desires to be neere him, in his heart, upon his arme; yea, she doth so desire him, that she contemneth all other things in comparison of him: for, what is the glorie, and the pompe, the riches, and honour, and the pleasures of the world unto her, more then vile drosse in comparison of Christ? The nature of man is much addicted to love riches, and the treasures of this world: yet there is not any thing of such force, to winne the heart from Christ; but the Spouse here affirmeth, that if all treasures should be offered her to draw her love from Christ, she would
utterly

utterly contemne them. And as the Saints cannot be drawne off from the love of Christ, by any worldly good: so no earthly treasure can get or purchase this love, for the gifts of the Spirit cannot be bought with money, it being the free gift of God, who bestows at his owne pleasure, Act. 8. 18, 19, 20. And so it's said of wisdom, that it cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for its price, Job 28. 15.

Now a little to recapitulate. How excellent is this divine love? which carries such an excellent description and denomination with it.

As first, That its as strong as death, which overcommeth all.

Secondly, That its jealousy, which is love inflamed, and therefore cruell as the grave, the bed of darknesse, which is called *Sheol*, because it alwayes craveth, and is never satisfied, but it devoureth all.

Thirdly, Its hot as the fire, which not only withstandeth, but also burneth all things which stand against it,

Fourthly, Its everlasting, and victorious in all labours and sufferings, that no troubles, terrours, nor persecutions can quench it, though whole floods of water were cast upon it.

Fifthly, It is so precious, that no commodities or pleasures, can answer or countervaille the value and estimation of it.

VER S. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14.

Wee have a little Sister, and she hath no Breasts: what shall wee do for our Sister in the day when she shall be spoken for?

If shee be a wall, wee will build upon her a Pallace of silver: and if she be a doore, wee will inclose her with boards of Cedar.

I am a wall, and my Breasts like Towers: then was I in his eyes, as one that found favour.

Solomon had a Vineyard at Baal-hamon, and let out the Vineyard unto keepers: every one for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand pieces of silver.

My Vineyard which is mine, is before me: thou (O Solomon) must have a thousand, and those that keep the fruit thereof, two hundred.

Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice: cause me to heare it.

Make hast, my beloved, and be thou like to a Roe, or to a young Hart upon the mountains of spices.

WEE are come to the conclusion and shutting up of this Song. Here be three speciall things to be handled in the close of all. As.

First, Here is a motion, a consultation or demand of the old Church of the *Jewes*, concerning the calling of the Gentiles, declaring that it is part of her spirituall joy, to see that they be called home unto Christ, and this is contained in verse 8, 9, 10.

Secondly, Christ againe on the other part, setteth out his affection to the Church, shewing his care over her, by a comparison made betweene

Solomons

solomons Vineyard, and the Church, and also by directing her to what should be best for her, *vers. 11, 12, 13.*

Lastly, the Church doth, as it were, take the words out of Christs mouth, and turneth them into an earnest request and prayer, intreating his continuall presence, comfort, and assistance for ever, to lead her, and guide her into all truth: and this is declared in the last Verse.

We have a little sister and she hath no breasts, &c.

We must know when this Song was penned, before Christs appearance in the flesh, the Church was shut up and limited among the *Jewes*: God suffered the *Gentiles* to wander in the vanities of their owne mind: but there were prophecies and promises that the *Gentiles* should be brought in at the coming of the Messiah, and there should be one body made up, both of *Jewes* and *Gentiles*. It is written of Christ, *I have made thee a light of the Gentiles, and the salvation to the ends of the earth. Also, aske of me and I will give thee the Heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.* Now those that were faithful among the *Jewes*, understanding this, are very carefull of them, saying, *What shall we doe for our Sister, &c.*

In this verse is described,

First, the relation of the Church of the *Gentiles* to the Church of the *Jewes*; she is her *Sister*.

Secondly, the condition of the Church of the *Gentiles*, and that is two-fold.

1. She is *Little*.

2. She hath *no Breasts*.

Thirdly

Thirdly, the care of the Church of the *Jewes* over this new Church by way of demand, *What shall we doe for our Sister?*

Fourthly, the time when her care was such, *In the day when she should be spoken for*, when she should be made manifest to the world.

We have a little Sister, &c.

The *Jewes* and the *Gentiles* which believe, are Sisters and Brethren. Here the Church of the *Gentiles* is called a Sister to the Church of the *Jewes*, and to Christ also, because they have both one common Father, *Viz.* the Lord, of whom is named the whole Family, in Heaven and in Earth, Ephes. 3. 15. All the Saints are Sonnes and Daughters of God, whither *Jewes* or *Gentiles*, through adoption and grace, Rom. 8. 16. & 2 Cor. 6. 18. Hence Observe.

That the Saints in the unity of faith become nearly related one to another, as Sisters and Brethren. Christ and all Saints are of one Father and Lord, of one Mother, *viz.* the heavenly Jerusalem. They are all Children, and of the seed of Abraham, for so saith the Apostle, *If yee be Christs, then are yee Abrahams seed*, and Heires of the promise, Gal. 3. 29. All the Saints are Heirs of Abraham, according to faith, and according to the promise. And the Apostle saith in Gal. 3. 26. *Yee are all the Sonnes of God by faith in Jesus Christ; for all yee that are baptized into Christ, have put on Christ; there is neither Jew nor Grecian, bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for yee are all one in Jesus Christ.* And though the Law was first given to the *Jewes* onely, which were the peculiar people of God, to whom appertained the adoption and glory, and the Covenants, and the service

vice of God, and the promises, &c. Rom. 9. 4. yet the Lord was pleased that the people that sate in darknesse should see a great light, and those that dwelt in the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined, Isa. 9. 2. So that the Jewes and Gentiles are now as brethren, having both received the same spirit, God hath put no difference betweene Jewes and Gentiles, after by faith he had purified their hearts, Acts 15. 9. Thus much for the relation between the Church of the Jews and the Church of the Gentiles, they were as Brethren and Sisters. Now follows the state and condition of the Church of the Gentiles, though she be a Sister to the Church of the Jewes, yet she is,

First, *A little Sister.*

Secondly, *She hath no Breasts.*

As the Church of the Gentiles was a Sister, so she was at that time but a little Sister; there being onely a few Profelytes brought in to believe in the Messiah, she was little then in being, and also in her minority; for we must observe, that this speech is formed according to the manner of the world. A young Damosell is not presently married, untill she grow up in years, she is not for marriage untill she hath Breasts to nourish the Children that she shall bring forth. So here she saith, we have a little Sister, she is not growne up, she is not come to ripenesse of yeares, to be given in marriage, being a small young Damosell. And it is added;

She hath no Breasts.

This is added even to expresse her littlenesse or smallnesse, as before; she is not yet marriageable, or fit for Christ, because she wanted those yeares and that ripe-

ripenesse that the Lord had appointed with himselfe for her, and the meanes also whereby she should come by it. So that this Church of the *Gentiles* had no stablished ministry, so that her Children could not suck the breasts of consolation, as in *Isa. 66. 11.* she was not come to the state of *Israel*, whose *Breasts* were fashioned, *Ezek. 16.* So that the *Gentiles* that were Proselytes to the Jewish Religion, had their ministry among the *Jews*, and received instruction from the Jewish Pastors.

Hence Observe.

That the Spouse in her nonage is under much weaknesse and frailty. Here the Church of the *Gentiles* is very little and small, she hath but onely a few Proselytes, not one of a thousand, very few and scarce. And she had no breasts, she had no spirituall nourishment for her Children, she was without the Oracles of God: it is true, the *Gentiles* had many wise men of the world, great Philosophers, and subtile disputers, but none of the doctrine of Christ, to nourish the soule: there was the worship of Devills, and all manner of superstition, there was great boasting of divine knowledge, that in respect of the true wisdom was all nothing but foolishnesse; and hence she saith, that her little Sister had no Breasts. And what here is spoken of the Church of the *Gentiles*, in respect of her nonage, the same may be applied to every particular Saint in the time of his nonage and minority. Now followeth the care that the Spouse hath for this her little Sister.

What shall we doe for our Sister in the day that she shall be spoken for?

Christ and the Spouse are here brought in, as it were a man and his wife, or a Brother and a Sister, debating what

what were beſt to be done with their youngſt Children or kindred, and which way they might moſt labour for their preferment: they take up a conſultation about the calling the Church of the *Gentiles*.

What ſhall we doe? &c. That is, what furtherance or help ſhall we afford her, to ſtabliſh and fettle her in the truth?

In the day, ſhe putteth day a part of time, for the prefixed and ſet time with God, wherein he would accompliſh the calling of the *Gentiles*. And that is the time that

She ſhall be ſpoken for.

When ſhe ſhall be ſpoken of, or, wherein ſpeech ſhall be of her: that is, when the fame of her conversion ſhall come abroad into the world: this Hebrew ſpeech, to be had of her, or, in her, may be underſtood two wayes. For, or *Againſt her*. For her, that is, when any make honourable mention of her, doth praiſe or commend her, or, the like. *Againſt her*, is when a people is turn'd to God, the wicked of the world doe preſently oppoſe them, as the people ſpake againſt God, and againſt Moſes, Num. 21. 5. Now from theſe words thus opened, Obſerve.

First, *It is the duty of ſtrong Chriſtians to aſſiſt and helpe thoſe that are weake.* *What ſhall we doe? &c.* What aid or furtherance ſhall we yield unto this our little Siſter? And thus ſhould Saints doe, when God hath given them ſtrong evidences of his love, they ſhould ſhew their love unto other of their brethren: and this was the charge Chriſt gave unto Peter, *When thou art converted, confirme thy Brethren.* Secondly Obſerve.

That faith makes men famous. The *Gentiles* were not thus talk'd of among the people of God, before their

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Conver-

Conversion, though for Learning, Arts, Valour, they were the men of name in the world, and accounted the honourablest of all the earth: but it's a greater honour to be godly, to belong to the Spouse of Christ, then to have all glory and praise in the world beside. True fame is onely to be had in godlinesse.

Thirdly Observe,

That when a people turne to God, they are the talke of the world. This is, if we take it for speaking against the Spouse; it is said, the wicked set their mouths against Heaven, and so against all the Saints: a people are never so much made the by-word and scorne of the world, as when there is any appearance of God among them. The appearance of God in the Saints is the object of the worlds hatred. Hitherto reacheth the question, propounded, as it were, by way of consultation and advise. Now followeth the answer.

VER S. 9.

*If she be a wall we will build upon her a Pallace of Silver,
and if she be a doore we will inclose her with boards of
Cedar.*

THIS Verse containeth an answer unto the former question, in which is set out unto us (yet metaphorically, and under figures) the resolution of Christ and his Spouse, what they will doe, and what way they will take, when the *Gentiles* shall come in their fullnesse. And here they are brought in as men consulting and taking advise, to place and plant great store of people, and that they will enlarge their rooms, and make their Situation glorious.

If

If ſhe be a wall.

A wall is for ſtrength and defence, and by the figure *Synechdoche*, is put for Towns and Cities to which they belong: Cities are often deſcribed by walls, gates, barrs, &c. 2 *Chron.* 8. 3. & *Revel.* 21. 12. Hereby is meant the faith and ſalvation of the Saints: as *then ſhalt call thy walls ſalvation*, *Iſa.* 66. 18. And, *we have a ſtrong City, ſalvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks*, *Iſa.* 26. 1.

We will build in it a Pallace of Silver.

We, Chriſt and his Spouſe, *will build* a Pallace; that is, we will not onely enlarge our walls for their ſakes, but we will provide all things for their entertainment, as may be delightful unto them. *ſilver* is a precious thing in eſteeme, and here it notes the purity, excellency, and durableneſſe of this Pallace, adorned with the Spirit, that ſo this glorious Pallace might be builded for an habitation of God through the Spirit, *Ephes.* 2. 22. And thus the glory and excellency of the Spouſe or New-Jeruſalem is deſcribed by the glorious City, in *Revel.* 21. It's added.

And if ſhe be a doore, &c.

The doore or gate of a City is for entrance, and ſometimes ſignifies the ſtrength and ſafety of a City: and therefore it's added, *We will encloſe her with boards of Cedar*: that is, with durable ſtrength, for Cedar will not rot or worm-eat as Writers affirme: for the durableneſſe thereof, ſee 2 *Sam.* 7. 2. 7. So that if they feare any to hinder their entrance, or being entred feare any annoyance from abroad, they need not feare,

D d d d d 2

for

for they shall have strong and pleasant walls, and mighty and durable gates safely to defend them.

Hence Observe,

That the Lord doth make a glorious and plentiful supply for his Church in all states and conditions. This indeed is the summe of the whole Verse, that whereas the Church of the *Gentiles* seemed little, and to have no breasts, here the Lord promises her to make her walls salvation, and that shee should be built the City of God, and a pretious Pallace for the King of glory to dwell in, and be the Temple of the most high; she should be a glorious Pallace of Silver most excellent and pure, builded for an habitation for the Spirit, and her gates should be sanctified (as in *Nehem. 3.*) and she should have a defence round about her, being enclosed with *Cedar*, strong and durable, and very sweet. Thus the Inhabitants of the holy City, the *New Jerusalem*, were guarded by Angells, and conducted into the holy Temple, *Revel. 21. 12. 27.* Now followeth the reply that the Spouse makes to this.

V. E. R. S. 10. *I am a wall, and my Breasts like Towers, then was I in his eyes as one that found favour.*

THe Church of the *Jewes* was at that time when this Song was written a wall, or indeed a City, the glorious City of the great King, and Breasts she had to nourish her Children, and the Lord dwelt in the midst of her as in his Pallace: but she speaketh here rather of the *Gentiles*, according to the promise of Christ to them, for when those things should be performed towards the *Gentiles*, as was promised, then they would be a glorious City, and her Breasts would be

be as Towers. But if it be objected, how could the Church of the *Jewes* speake this of the Church of the *Gentiles* in the time past, or present, and not in the time to come: why did she not say, then I shall be a wall, &c. This may be answered two wayes.

First, That the Hebrews doe use the preterperfect tense, sometimes for the future. Or,

Secondly, Thus, that in the certaintie of faith, she speaketh of that which was to come, as if it had been come.

Here are three things which the Spouse glorieth in, concerning her happy estate at the comming in of her little Sister, the Church of the *Gentiles*.

First, That she is then a wall, even a glorious Citie, and a silver Palace built upon her.

Secondly, Her *Breasts* are as *Towers*.

Thirdly, That she *found favour in his sight*.

I am a wall.

I am, or I became a wall: that is, I grew up, and increased in the faith and knowledge of Christ, for although the Church of the *Jewes* were the Citie of God before, yet now far more large by the multitude and glorie of the *Gentiles* comming in, and being made one body with her in Christ: but why doth not the Spouse say, *she is a wall*, seeing it was spoken of her little Sister: but she saith, *I am a wall*? The reason is, that as they are severall parts, they are called Sisters, yet in Christ, joyned in one, they be but one Church.

Hence Observe.

That all the Saints make but one body.

Christ is made up of all Saints, and the body is not com-

compleat till all the Saints are brought in : so here, her little Sister is her selfe, being joyned to her in Christ : so in that respect she saith, I am a wall, I my selfe am that glorious City, that heavenly Pallace, the Pallace of the great King. So what glorie or priviledge belong to the whole Church, every particular Member may apply it to himselfe, for what belongs to one, belongs to all, and what appertaines to the whole, belongs to every Member : and therefore the Church of the Jewes, doth appropriate the glorie of the Gentiles to her selfe, as being interested in it. The second thing then is, that

Her breasts are as Towers.

Her Breasts now are fashioned, as it is in *Ezek. 16. 7.* now there is nourishment in me to nourish all my Children, as if she had said : The similitude of Towers, noteth the strength, power, and glorie of the administration of the Gospell.

Hence Observe.

First, *That the spouse is glorious in her spirituall administration of the Gospell.*

It is her spirituall ministry, that giveth the spirituall milke, whereby her Children are nourished. Now the breasts of the Spouse are like Towers, there is milke to nourish great multitudes of Children : for, when the word of the Lord went forth from *Jerusalem*, and the Law out of *Zion*, unto the mighty Nations, according as the Prophets foretold, it should come to passe, the Lord gave great gifts of the Spirit, and great light in the knowledge of divine mysteries, whereby the Saints were raised up in the knowledge of God, and Christ. So that, in the ministrie of
the

the Gospell, the breasts of the Spouse were like great high Towers.

Secondly Observe.

That faith seeketh things to come, as if they were present.

For, here long before the Gentiles were made a Church, the Spouse saith, *I am a wall, and my breasts like Towers.* Wee may see the same in David, in Psal. 60. 6, 7. *God hath spoken in his holinesse (saith he) I will rejoyce, I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth: Gilead is mine, and Manasseth is mine, &c.* yet though David thus spoke, he had not these in possession, but was kept out of them: yet he accounts them all his, as in possession, and why? because God had spoken in his holinesse: he enjoyed them by faith in the promise, and so did the Spouse here, when she saith, *I am a wall, &c.* The last thing followeth, wherein the Spouse doth glorie.

Then was I in his eyes as one that found favour.

Here the Spouse acknowledgeth not only that she was a glorious Citie: and that she was glorious in her ministrie and divine nourishment: but also in favour and peace, with comfort and joy in the holy Ghost.

Then shall I be in his eyes: that is, in his judgement or esteeme: the eye being the instrument to conveigh things to the understanding, here it is put for the understanding it selfe: she therefore putteth the eye for the judgement that Christ will have of her.

As one that found favour, It is in the Hebrew, *as one that findeth peace*, that is, very deare and precious, full of delight and contentment, for even as that man that hath

hath lived in long and great disquietnesse, notwithstanding seeking for peace, and finding it at length, hath obtained his hearts delight and joy, yea, that which he prefers above al other enjoyments: so it was with the Spouse, and in effect, the meaning is, when the Gentiles should come in multitudes, and be added to the Church, when she should be so glorious in the ministry of the Gospell, the knowledge of Christ should be spread abroad; she should be filled with divine nourishment, this should fill her with favour and inward peace: she should be filled with the sweet evidences of divine glorie.

Hence Observe.

The more fellowship wee have with Christ, the more divine peace wee have.

For here the Spouse saith, when the Gentiles shall grow up to a full body, I shall grow up with them, then shall I enjoy that quietnesse and blessednesse of Spirit, for which now I long and labour for. Wee in our naturall or fleshly condition are enemies to God, Rom. 5. 10. *But being justified by faith, wee have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, Rom. 5. 1.* This is the peace of the Spirit, which directeth the hearts and minds (of the Saint) through Jesus Christ, Phil. 4. 7. The Soule is only at rest, and quietnesse in the bosome of God, in the light and knowledge of him, in the assurance and evidence of divine love: so *The worke of righteousness is peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietnesse and assurance for ever, Isa. 32. 17.* It followeth.

VERS.

VERS. II, 12.

Solomon had a Vinyard at Baal-hamon, and let out the Vineyard unto keepers : every one for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand pieces of silver.

My Vineyard which is mine, is before me: thou (O Solomon) must have a thousand, and those that keep the fruit thereof, two hundred.

NOW wee come to the second thing, which is the comparison between *Solomons* Vineyard and Christs Vineyard. The Spouse is called a Vine, and a Vineyard, and so the comparison is made betweene her and another Vineyard. As *Solomon* did exceed in all his glorie and pompe; so all things that he had, did in their kind excel. His Vinyard in *Baal-hamon* was a most excellent, fruitfull Vineyard, and of high account, but Christs Vineyard did farre excell it.

The comparison here is drawne betweene Christs Vineyard and *Solomons*; and there is first a similitude or likenesse. Secondly, There is a dissimilitude or unlikenesse betweene them.

First, The similitude is,

1. *Solomon* had a Vineyard : so had Christ.
2. *Solomons* Vineyard was fruitfull : so was Christs, as fruitfull as ever *Solomons* was.
3. *Solomon* had a care of his Vineyard, he let it out to Keepers : so had Christ as much and more care over his, for he kept it in his owne hand, *My Vineyard is before me*, saith he. But then,

Secondly, The dissimilitude is

First, *Solomon* could not keepe and dresse his vineyard himselfe, but Christ keeps his in his own hand.

E e e e

Secondly,

Secondly, *Solomon* received not all the benefit, and fruit of his vineyard: but *Christ* received all the fruits of his: those that kept *Solomons Vineyard*, were to have the fifth part of the fruit.

Solomon had a Vineyard, &c.

Solomon had all things excellent, and above others; and this notes the excellency of *Christs Vineyard*, in that it is compared to *Solomons*: by the Vineyard is meant the Church in generall: for the house of *Israël* was the Lords Vineyard *Isa* 5. 7. This Vineyard is commended for its situation.

At Baal-hamon.

Baal-hamon was not the proper name of a place, but signifieth here a most fruitfull soile or place: for *Baal*, signifieth a Lord, Master, or Owner: and *Hamon*, a multitude; that is, the Lord of a multitude: so that is as much as to say, in a place so plenteous, that it bringeth forth multitudes of Vines: and therefore the Church being situate in a fertile place, is called, *Bekeren ben shamen*, the home of the Sonne of Oyle; that is, a very fruitfull hill. The fruitfullnesse of *Solomons* vineyard, doth note out the fruitfullnesse of the Spouse. The next thing shews *Solomons* care over his Vineyard.

He let out the Vineyard unto keepers.

Though *Solomon* made great account of his Vineyard, yet he did not dwell in it, and keepe it himselfe. He was not so much delighted with it, as alwaies to have it in his presence, and never out of his sight: he let it out to keepers: that is, he let it forth to hire, or for

for a certaine rent to such as should keepe, dresse, prune, cut, and trimme the same. Herein there is a dissimilitude betweene Christs and *Solomons* Vineyard, because Christ kept his in his owne hand, and it was alwayes in his presence and sight. Now followeth the benefit that *Solomon* received by his Vineyard.

Every one for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand pieces of Silver.

These keepers and dressers of the Vineyard must have their hire, and therefore it's said that they bring *every one a thousand pieces of Silver*, that is, for the fruit they have reaped from the Vineyard, or for the rent thereof they were to bring a thousand pieces of Silver, that is, a very great summe, for he putteth a certaine for an uncertaine. Some read, shekles, which we may take for common shekles, which was halfe so much as the shekles of the Sanctuary, and did amount (as some suppose) to the value of twenty-pence. The commendations here of the Vineyard, is, that it was hired or let at a great rent, which is an argument of the great fruitfullnesse thereof: and in this Verse is contained the first part of the comparison: Now followeth the reddition.

See Beza
on Mat.
17. 18.

V E R S. 12.

My Vineyard which is mine is before me: Thou (O Solomon) must have a thousand, and those that keep the fruit thereof, two hundred.

Here is the dissimilitude, the Vineyard of Christ, even his deare Spouse, which belongeth onely to him, and to none other, no man shall succeed him in
Eeeee 2 it,

it, because he is the eternall Lord and heire of all things, *Heb. 1. 2.* And further he saith, *which is before me*: that is before my face, so that I continually looke upon it, and have an eye over it, or watch over it for good: noting his continuall presence in his Church, as in *Matth. 28. 19* and also his continuall dressing and pruning of the same (as Husbandmen doe their Vineyards) that it may bring forth more fruit, as in *Joh. 15. 2.* And here Christs Vineyard is preferred before *Solomons*: namely, because he is inforced to put forth his; but Christ doth as it were, with his owne hands, prune and keepe his owne Vineyard.

Then (O Solomon) must have a thousand, &c.

There did belong a thousand sheckles of silver, or a thousand *silverlings* to *Solomon* as hire or rent: this we had in the former verse: but here followeth a subtraction or lessening of *Solomons* profit, in the following words.

And those that keepe the fruit thereof, two hundred.

There is a portion that appertaines to those that dresse this Vineyard, and make it fruitfull. This is spoken by way of concession or granting: thus I yeild to this, that thy Vineyard is worth a thousand pieces of silver: but out of that, those that keepe the fruit thereof, must have two hundred, which ariseth to the fifth part of the gaine. Now from this comparison thus drawne, Observe.

First, *That the Spouse is Christs Vineyard.* The house of *Israel* was the Lords Vineyard, *Ija. 5. 7.* but of this we have spoken before in this Song.

Secondly, *Christs Vineyard is a fruitful Vineyard.* King
Solomon

Solomon was excellent in all things, and therefore his Vineyard could not be but fruitfull, and it being Situate in *Baal-hamon*, a fertile soyle, by this is noted the fruitfullnesse of Christs Vineyard. Thirdly Observe.

That Christ injoyes all the fruit of his owne Vineyard. And this is held forth to us in the dissimilitude betwene *Solomons* Vineyard and Christs. *Solomon* was forc't to give away the fifth part of the profit to his Keepers, but Christ doth reap all the fruit of the graces of his Saints, all the fruits of the Spirit, as praise and thanksgiving redound unto him.

Fourthly Observe, *That Christ keeps the Vineyard of his Church in his owne hands.* As he hath the whole fruits of it, so his eyes are alwayes upon it for good. Christ appeared in the midst of the seven golden Candlesticks, which are the seven Churches, *Revel. 1.* Christ is alwayes himselfe in his Vineyard, to dresse it, and to prune it, and to make every Vine prosper. Let none therefore thinke they have the domination over the Church, Christ onely is Lord and head, he stands in need of no Vicar or Vice-gerent, which is one in the stead to doe that which Christ should doe if he were present: this is Antichrist that takes the very office of Christ, which is to sway in his Church alone.

But it may be demanded, doth not Christ let forth his Vineyard to Dressers? Did not *Paul* plant, and *Apollo* water? &c.

I answer, That the Prophets and Apostles as they were annointed to office and dignity, they were in some sort called the dressers of Christs Vine, but yet no farr her but as instruments whom Christ useth; for he is present with them, and in them, he worketh by them,

them, and therefore he holdeth the seven Starres in his right hand, which are the Angells of the seaven Churches, *Revel. 1.* The Keepers of *Solomons Vineyard* doe keep it in his absence, but the Keepers of Christs Vine can doe nothing unlesse he be with them, and worke by them. Christ then will take care of his Church, and take it so into his owne hands at last, that even *Leviathan*, and the Dragon that is in the Sea shall be slaine, and in that day his Spouse shall sing, *A Vineyard of new wine*, *Isa. 27. 1, 2.* The Lord will keep it, and water it every moment, least any hurt it, he will keep it night and day, and at last free his Church from both it's oppressions, and oppressors. All this shews how precious and how deare the Spouse was to Christ, that he keepeth it himselfe, and how faithfull the Spouse is to him, that doth bring forth her fruits to none but him. Christ having thus declared the care he had over his Church, he now layeth a charge on her in the Verse following.

V E R S. 13.

O thou that dwellest in the Gardens, the companions bearken to thy voyce, cause me to heare it.

AFTER that Christ had extolled the excellency of this Vine, that is, of his Church, he turneth his speech unto her, giving her thereby, as it were, to understand, that he had done all this, not onely for her comfort, but also for her instruction: for her comfort in that she was so highly, yet truly commended: for her instruction, that she might learne thereby to extoll him in deed and in truth, that had been so liberall in her commendation.

O thou

O thou that dwellest in the Gardens.

Christ giveth a solemne charge, and prescribeth a duty to be performed; which is described, first, by the place of her abode, *Among the Gardens, &c.* The Participle being of the Feminine Gender, sheweth that it is the Church, not Christ that is here spoken to: we may render it, *O inhabitresse*: Christ speaks to his Spouse dwelling in the *Gardens*, that is, in the Churches in which the universall Church is after a sort resident, and a continuall dweller, Christ yet notwithstanding having care, both over the whole, and over every particular one, pruning and dressing them, as appears by the particular Churches mentioned, *Revel. 1, 2, 3.* Now in that the Churches are called the *Gardens*, Observe,

That the Churches of Christ are the severall Gardens of the Lord. The whole Church is called a Garden full of all sweet plants, as we had before in this Song. The particular Churches which are parts of the whole, be called *Gardens*: now in that the universall Church, even the Spouse of Christ, is spread over all, she is said to dwell in *Gardens*, that is, in all the particular assemblies which know and worship Christ aright, throughout the world. Her care is over all, they be all her Children and her plants: and so she is said to dwell in the *Gardens*, she dwelleth in her judgement, heart, and affections, in all the Churches;

The next clause is;

The companions hearken to thy voyce, cause me to heare.

The Spouse is enjoyned to publish and preach the Gospel of Christ; and the persons to whom she must preach

preach are her *Companions*. By *Companions* he seemeth to meane her fellow-Christians, partakers of the same faith, and Spirit, and grace, 2 *Pet.* 1. 1. These *Companions* or *Fellows*, doe attend to the voyce of Christ, published by the Spouse. Now in that it is added, *Make me to heare it*, our English Translation hath the particle *It* added, which is not in the Hebrew Text: the words are no more then, *make me to heare*, and it doth signifie to Preach, because they that preach make those to heare whom they preach unto: so that we may understand the words thus, *Preach me*, &c. for that is the great office of the Church to preach and publish Christ: as if Christ had said, Preach me to thy *Companions* and fellow-Christians, that attend to thy voyce, let thy doctrines be my Gospell, not mens traditions. Hence Observe,

First, *That it is the Office of the Church and Saints to preach and publish Christ.* This the Apostle exhorteth unto, when he saith, *Let the word of God dwell in you plentifully, in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing your selves in Psalms and Hymnes, and spirituall Songs, singing with grace in your hearts, unto the Lord,* Col. 3. 16. This preaching of Christ is a special argument of the love of the Spouse unto her members, as appears by the words of Christ, when he saith, *Peter lovest thou me, feed my Lambs,* John 21. 15. As if he should say, this is a great fruit of thy love which I require, preach me to my people. So the Spouse professing that great abundance of her love to Christ, a little before in this Chapter; Christ requireth that she will manifest it, in preaching him before the Saints. As if Christ should say, manifest thy love unto me by preaching and publishing me, laying open the treasures of life and salvation

tion that are in me, unto those that hearken. Herein then lieth the performance of a great duty of the Spouse, & a singular declaration of her love to Christ, that she preach him, that she publish and lay open all the treasures of life and glory, that be in him.

Secondly, Observe,

That such as preach the Gospel to the Saints, must preach to them as to fellow-Christians. This implieth, that those that preach to the people must not Lord it over them; not as to be Lords over their faith (as the Apostle saith) ^{now slaves to their fancies} but to be helpers of their joy. Paul though an Apostle, yet he was a *Servant of Jesus Christ*, as in Rom. 1. 1. The Angell said to John which would have fallen downe before him, *See thou doe it not, for I am thy fellow-servant*, Rev. 21. 9. Those that preach the Gospel must preach as to fellow-members of the same body, companions in the faith and Spirit of Christ, they should communicate unto them the things they have received from Christ, as unto brethren, and fellow-members of the same body.

Thirdly, Observe,

That the most precious treasures of the Gospel, should be especially, discovered and preached to the Saints. So here, the companions are said to be such as heare, and unto them the Spouse is enjoyned to Preach Christ. It is most true, that the Gospel is to be Preached to every creature under Heaven, yet Christ saith, *Give not holy things to dogs, neither cast Pearls before Swine.* The precious treasure of the Gospel is to be communicated especially to the Saints, and such as have a high esteem thereof, to those that have their ears boarded of God, and made to heare and receiye those precious things. The Apostle saith, *We preach Christ crucified, even to the*

Ffff

Jewes

Jews a stumbling block, and to the Gentiles foolishnesse, but unto them which are called, both of Jews and Greccians, we preach Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God, 1 Cor. 1. 23. And againe the Apostle saith, I am not ashamed of the Gospell, for it is the power of God unto salvation, unto them that believe, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile, Rom. 1. 16. The Gospell is most effectually to the Saints, they are the companions that hearken to the doctrine of Christ. Lastly Observe,

That the Spouse is to preach Christ onely, without mixture of mens traditions. Cause me to heare, cause me, and none besides me to be heard: Preach not the doctrines and traditions of men, but preach onely the doctrines of my Gospell. Christ condemned the Pharisees, for that they preached for doctrines the traditions of men, and so neglected the doctrine and word of God. And now followeth the last verse.

V E R S. 14.

Make hast my beloved, and be thou like a Roe or young Hart upon the Mountaine of spices.

Here is the conclusion of the Song, wherein the Spouse doth powre forth a vehement request or prayer unto her beloved: for as she began this Song with a prayer, so likewise doth she end it with prayer. The Spouse making acceptance of the charge, to wit, of preaching the Gospell committed unto her, whereby she should procure many enemies: therefore she desireth that Christ would not absent himselfe from her, but that he would be alwayes ready to assist and comfort her.

Make hast my beloved.

In these words the Spouse desireth Christs neer approach

proach unto her, though the words seeme to insinuate, as though the Spouse wished the removing of Christ, especially as the words are rendered by some, *Flee my beloved*, but this expression doth rather intimate, that Christ should depart from those low and earthly discoveries that he had appeared in, and that he would manifest himselfe in a more glorious dispensation unto her.

And be like unto the Roe, or the young Hart.

To the end that the Spouse may the better expresse the speed or swiftnesse that she would have Christ to use in comming towards her, she useth this double similitude for the swiftnesse of these creatures: see that which is written, *Psal. 18. 33.* To which end tendeth the word *young*, because they are far more lusty and fresh, then when they grow to greater years. See more for this in Chap. 2. 9. 17.

Upon the Mountaines of Spices.

If we refer this as some doe, to the *Roe*, or *young Harts*, then it meaneth most pleasant Hills or Mountaines, abounding with all manner of pleasant Spices, whither these *Roes* or *young Harts*, flew for succour and reliefe. But if we refer it to Christ, as it seems most agreeable, then it meaneth a most heavenly discovery of Christ, that he would come in a more glorious appearance then formerly, which appearance of his is expressed by those things that are of the greatest sweetnesse and delight, to wit, *Mountaines of Spices*. In summe, this is the meaning of this verse, that the Spouse imbracing Christs Commandement touching the publishing and spreading abroad of his name, and knowing how hard a thing it is to performe such a duty, as well by

reason of the matter it selfe, as also by reason of the great difficulties and dangers that accompany such an action, doth earnestly desire Christs appearance in greater glory & manifestation of his divine presence to lead her and guide her in the performance of such a duty. Hence Observe.

That the Saints earnestly desire to be atted and carried forth by the assistance of Christs divine presence. The Spouse here desireth that Christ would inable her to manifest his name by his hasty approach unto her, in the glorious discoveries of himselfe, as upon the Mountaines of Spices; and that he would more and more manifest his divine presence to her, by which she might be assisted and carried forth of all difficulties whatsoever. The Spouse earnestly desireth to see the King in his beauty, and to sit upon the Throne of his glory: And thus as the Song begun with a desire of the kisses of Christs mouth, so she concludes also with a desire of his comming in glory. Thus is the end of the Revelation. *The Spirit and the Bride* (even all that are faithfull) *say come, and let him that heareth, say come, &c.* And Christ answers this request, saying, *Surely I come quickly, Amen, even so come Lord Jesus,* Revel. 22. 17. 20. So let the Lord come upon the Mountaine of Spices according to his good pleasure.

So Endeth this most excellent SONG OF SONGS..

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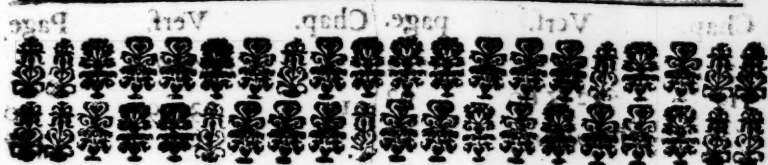
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THE
P R I N T E R
To the
R E A D E R.

BY reason of the Authors absence there have divers faults passed the Presse, which his eye would have prevented, but I hope thou wilt correct with thine owne Pen, what thou seest amisse, and in so doing, shalt doe a kindnesse both to the Authour and to me, and for thy example, I shall only set downe two or three faults that come to mine eye.

E R R A T A.

IN page 31. line 5. for manifest reade manifold, in pag. 51. l. 18. for exalt r. exult. pag. 171. l. 23. for their r. other. 238. l. 24. for them r. her. And the like.

F I N I S.